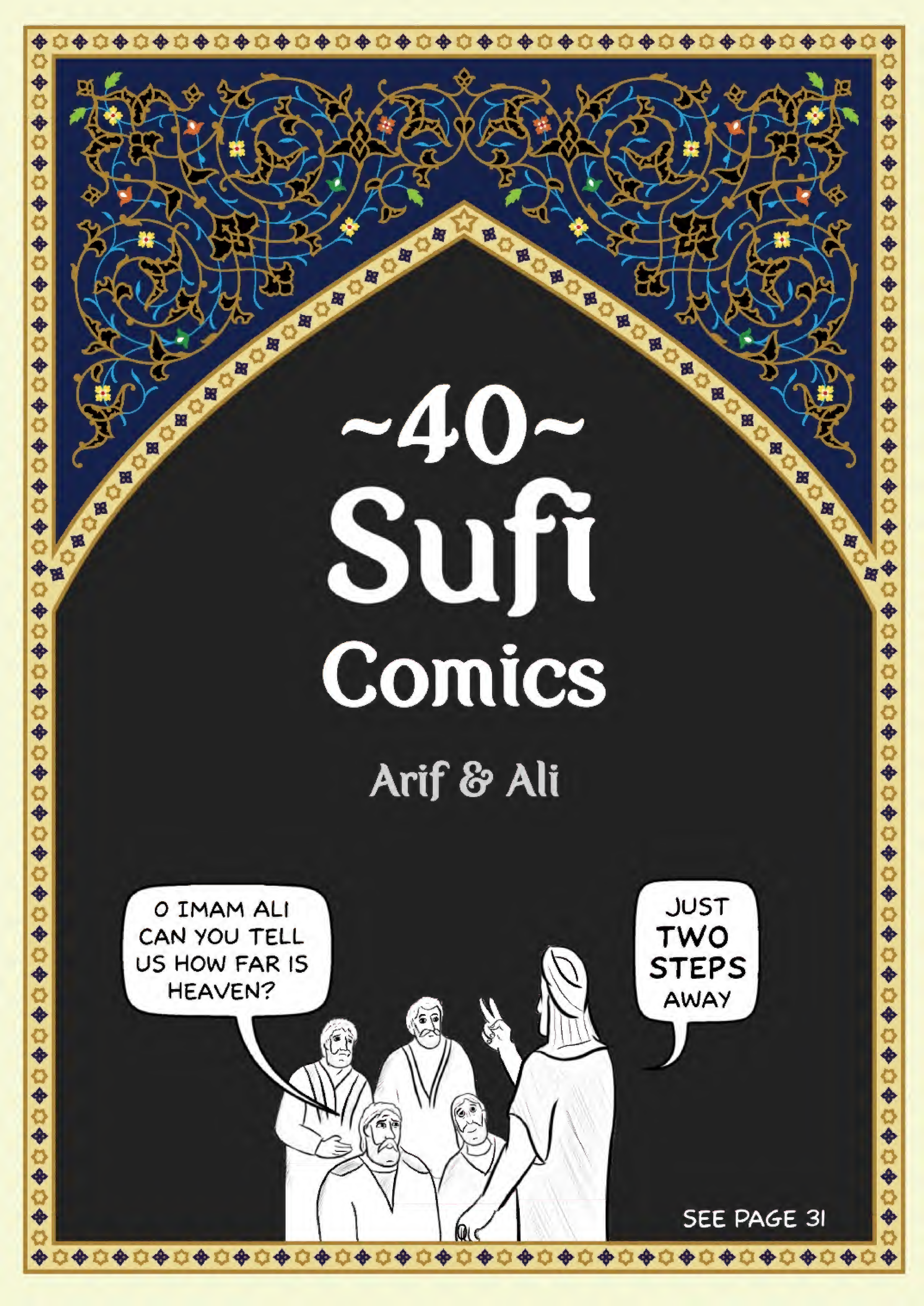

~40~
Sufi
Comics
Arif & Ali
O IMAM ALI CAN YOU TELL US HOW FAR IS HEAVEN?
JUST TWO STEPS AWAY
SEE PAGE 31

Online version of 40 Sufi Comics is available at:
http://vakil.org/40-sufi-comics
Email: suficomics@vakil.org

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Introduction

During my childhood & teenage years I attended a Madressa (Islamic School) where we were taught beautiful stories from history & sacred traditions. Our teachers were very gifted. They would narrate the stories in such an engaging way that time stood still, and I felt as though a movie were playing in my head. These stories of faith, wit, love, sacrifice and adventure have stayed with me and influenced my life.

Over the last two years, I have been learning the art of drawing comics & and have used it to express some of these stories. As I completed each comic, Arif and I would publish it on our blog (http://www.vakil.org). Though the feedback for the online version was tremendous, a great many still requested to see the compendium of this work in printed form.

Alongside each comic, I have included verses from the Holy Qur'an and the Traditions from the Prophet & the Ahlul Bayt that are pertinent to the respective comic's topic. For some comics, I further included my own reflections as I drew the comics.

You may wonder why some of the characters don't have their faces drawn. Traditionally, Islamic art does not depict the faces of Holy personalities, and I have respected this tradition in these comics. I truly hope you enjoy reading *40 Sufi Comics*!

I would like to thank Abdulbasier aziz, Uma Satish and Zeenat Merchant-Syal who've given the necessary encouragement and feedback to make this book possible. My sincere gratitude to those who have been the source of spiritual guidance in my life: Sheikh Arif Abdulhussain, Al-Haj Hassanain Rajabali & Sheikh Khalil Jaffer. Many of the stories in 40 Sufi Comics, I have learnt from them.

This book is dedicated to our Grandmother,
Maryam Vakil.

Ethics

JUSTIFYING WRONG ACTIONS

Sufi Comics

Arif & Ali















In the Qur'an

(It is) a blessed Book that We have sent down to you, so that they may contemplate its signs, and that those who posses intellect may take admonishment. (38:29)

In the Traditions

The Prophet with regards to Allah's verse in the Qur'an "and recite the Qur'an in a measured tone" said, "Recite it clearly, do not disperse it prosaically, nor rave it like raving poetry. Stop where it mentions wonders, and move the hearts with it, and do not let your only concern be (to finish) the end of the chapter."

Imam Ali said, "Verily there is no good in recitation that does not have contemplation in it. Verily, there is no good in worship that does not have understanding."

ARTIST'S NOTES: THE VERSES OF THE QURAN CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD IF THE READER APPROACHES IT BY IMPOSING HIS IDEAS ON IT. RATHER IT SHOULD BE APPROACHED WITH AN OPEN & SINCERE HEART TO UNDERSTAND IT'S OUTER AND INNER MEANINGS. THE QURAN CAN HAVE AN EMPOWERING EFFECT ON THE READER. IT'S A BOOK THAT CHALLENGES, DEBATES, CRITISIZES AND GIVES HOPE TO THE READER. AT TIMES ONE MAY FEEL THAT THEY ARE NOT READING THE QURAN, BUT THE QURAN IS READING THEM.

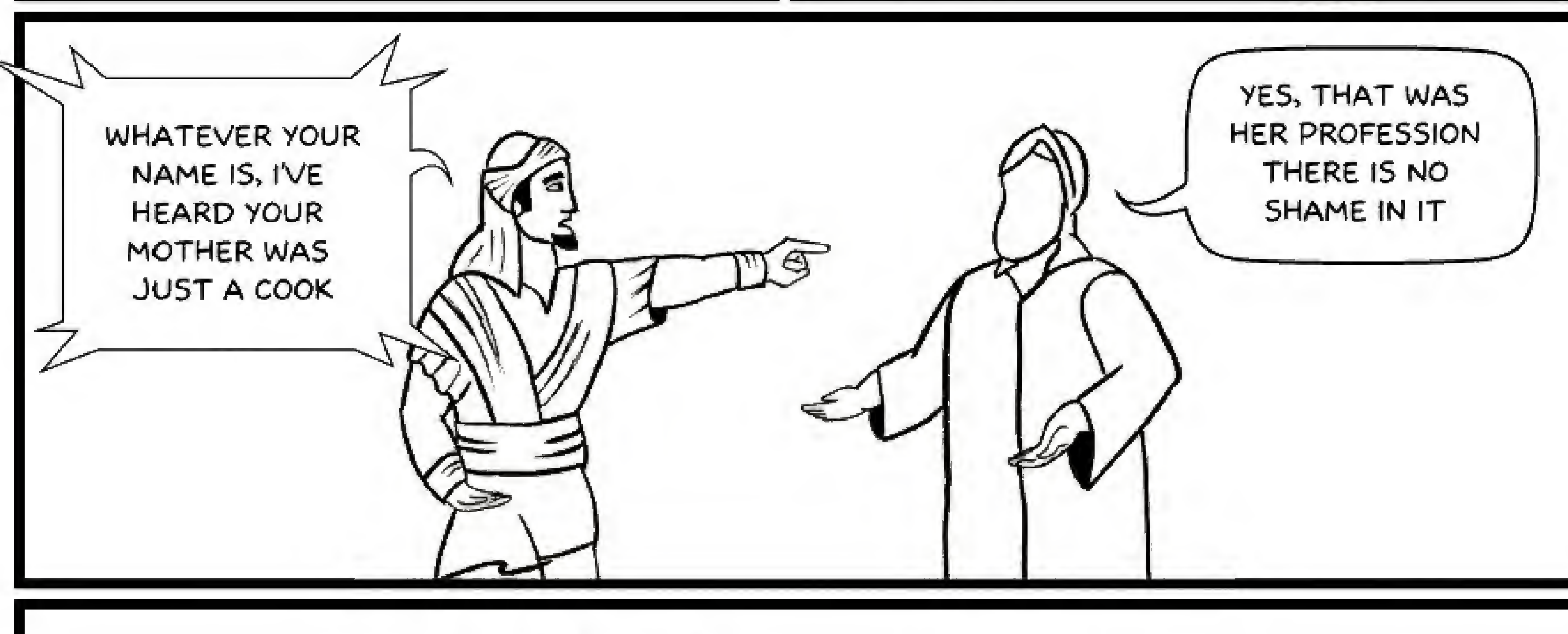
GOOD MANNERS MELT A HARD HEART

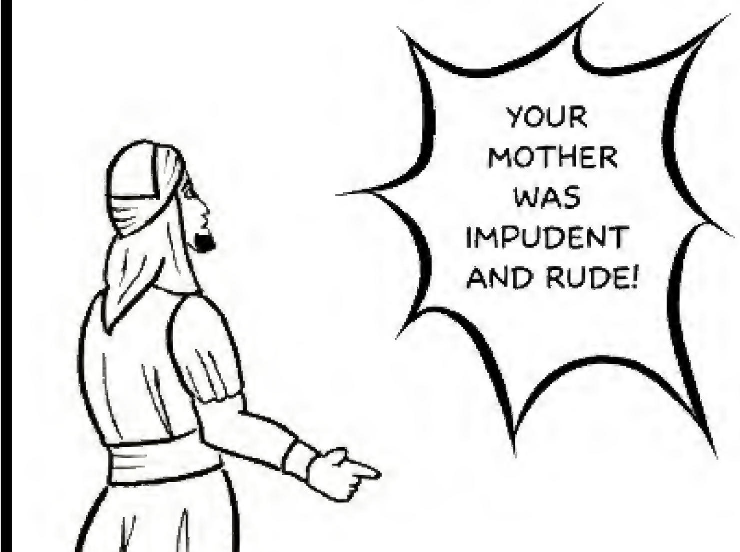
Sufi Comics

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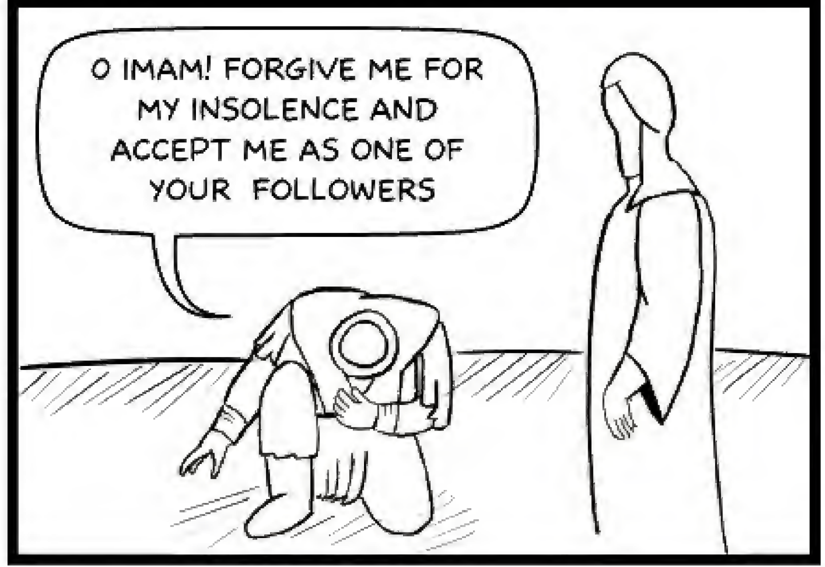












In the Qur'an

Repel (evil) with what is best, and lo! He between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend (41:34)

And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace (25:63)

In the Traditions

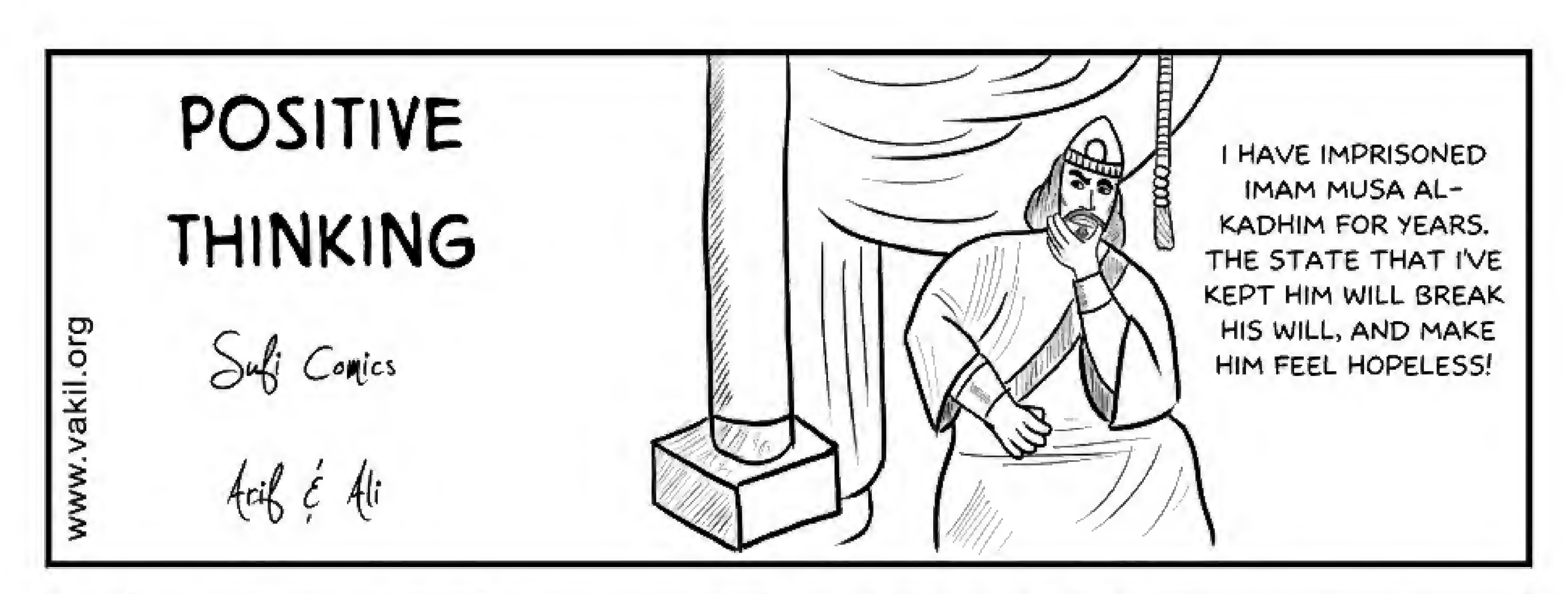
The Prophet said, "I have been sent to perfect the nobility of your character."

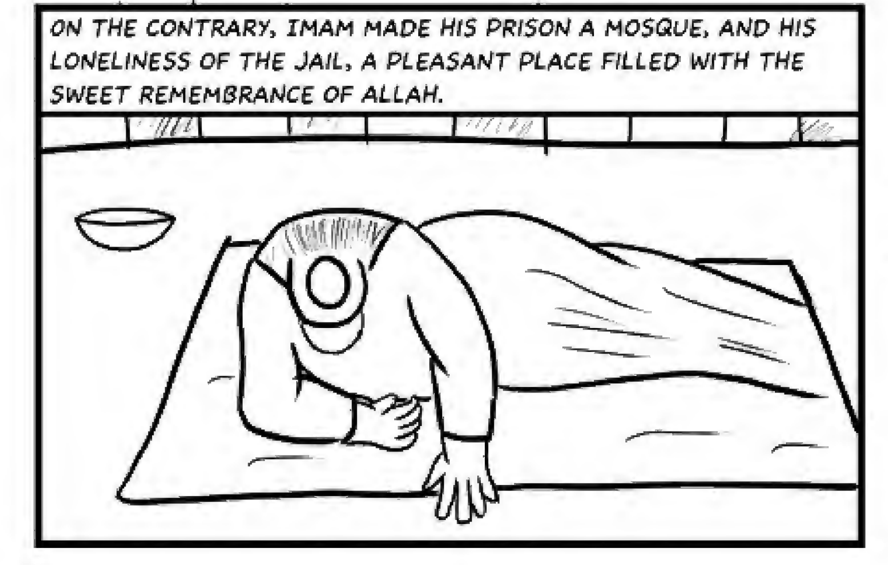
The Prophet said, "Good character melts sins as the sun melts ice, and bad character spoils an action just as vinegar spoils honey."

A man came to the Prophet saying "O Prophet of God, which people have the most perfect faith?" "Those of them who have the best character", he replied.

Imam Ali said, "Cheerfulness is the basis of love, tolerance the burial of faults, conciliation the concealing of shortcomings, and there is no better relative than good character."

ARTIST'S NOTES: I RECALL THIS ANECDOTE WHENEVER SOMEONE IS RUDE. THE IMAM'S APPROACH IS BEAUTIFUL. RATHER THAN DISAGREEING WITH HIM, WHICH WOULD HAVE AGGRAVATED THE SITUAITON, HE HAD HOPE IN THE MAN'S GOODNESS AND USED IT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS HIS SUBMISSION TO GOD & BELIEF IN HIS FORGIVENESS.







ARTIST'S NOTES: WHEN I RECALL THIS STORY, IT GIVES ME HOPE THAT NO MATTER HOW PAINFUL MY CIRCUMSTANCES ARE, I HAVE A CHOICE HOW TO REACT TO IT. INSTEAD OF LOOKING AT THE SHADOW, I CAN FOCUS MY ATTENTION ON HOW BRIGHT THE SUN IS SHINING. THE CIRUMSTANCES OUTSIDE OUR LIFE ARE NEUTRAL. WHAT MAKES THEM GOOD OR BAD IS OUR REACTION TO THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES.

In the Qur'an

Therefore remember Me, I will remember you (2:152)

Call on your Lord humbly and secretly (7:55)

In the Traditions

O God,
bless Muhammad and his Household,
tempt me not with what Thou hast given to Thy creatures
and tempt them not with what Thou hast withheld from me.
Lest I envy Thy creatures
and despise Thy decision!
O God,
bless Muhammad and his Household,
delight my soul through Thy decree,
expand my breast through the instances of Thy decision,
give to me a trust through which I may admit
that Thy decree runs only to the best,
and let my gratitude to Thee
for what Thou hast taken away from me
be more abundant than my gratitude to Thee
for what Thou hast conferred upon me!
Preserve me from imagining any meanness
in someone who is destitute
or imagining any superiority
in someone who possesses wealth,
for the noble is he whom obedience to Thee has ennobled
and the exalted is he whom worship of Thee has exalted!

Excerpt of Supplication In Satisfaction with the Decree of God
by Imam Zainul Abideen


THE FORGIVING COMMANDER
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
www.vakil.org
ONCE IN THE MARKETS OF KUFA, IRAQ
O MAN, YOU HAVE JUST INSULTED MAALIK ASHTAR, THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE MUSLIM ARMY
THE SAME MAALIK WHO MAKES HIS ENEMIES TREMBLE IN FEAR?
WHAT HAVE I DONE! I THINK I SEE HIM ENTERING THE MOSQUE
UHH ...
I AM SORRY FOR THE SIN I HAVE COMMITTED
THERE IS NO SIN UPON YOU, BY GOD, I CAME TO THE MOSQUE ESPECIALLY TO SEEK FORGIVENESS FOR YOU.

In the Qur'an

"Take to forgiveness and enjoin good and turn aside from the ignorant" (7:199)

In the Traditions

"When a man asked the Prophet to explain nobility of character to him, he replied, "It means that you should forgive him who has wronged you, re-establish ties with him who has broken them off, give to him who has denied you something, and tell the truth even if it is against your own interests."

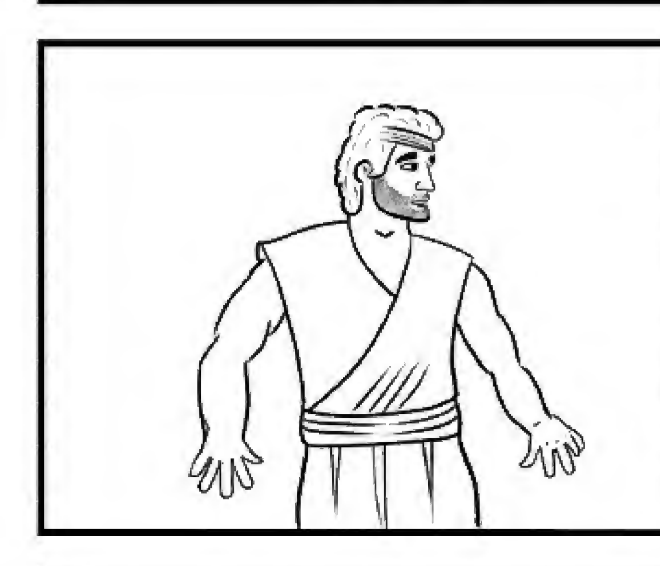
Imam Ali said, "If you overcome your enemy, then make your forgiveness of them gratitude for your position of strength over them"

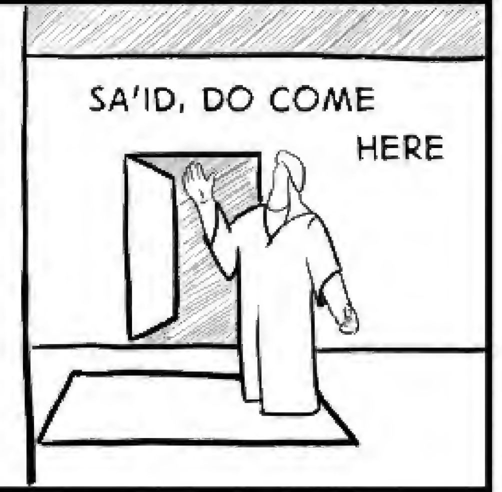
CHILDISH BEHAVIOUR

Sufi Comics

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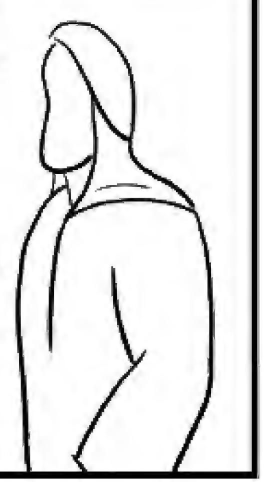












In the Qur'an

And those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men; and Allah loves the virtuous (Quran 3: 134)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said, "Shall I tell you who is the toughest and strongest from among you?" They replied, "Yes Messenger of Allah, do tell us", so the Prophet said "The strongest and toughest of you is he who, when he is happy, his happiness does not lead him to committing a sin or anything wrong, and when he gets angry, his anger does not prevent him from speaking the truth, and when he is empowered in any way, he does not take hold of that which is not lawfully his."

Imam Ali said, "There are six things by which people's intellects may be tested: clemency at the time of anger, patience at the time of fear, calculation when faced with a desire, Godwariness at all times, amicableness, and minimal engagement in disputation."

ARTIST'S NOTES: WHEN I WAS IN MY EARLY TEENS I REMEMBER BEING INFLUENCED BY PEOPLE WHO THOUGHT EXPRESSING ANGER AT PEOPLE BELOW THEM WAS A SIGN OF STRENGTH. I WOULD COPY THEM, THINKING THAT WAS THE RIGHT WAY TO BEHAVE. THEN A DAY CAME WHEN I READ THIS STORY IN NAHJUL BALAGHA. IT WAS A TURNING POINT FOR ME IN UNDERSTANDING THAT SHOWING ANGER IS NOT A SIGN OF STRENGTH. THE STORY INFLUENCED ME ON HOW I RESPONDED TO SITUATIONS THAT AROUSED ANGER IN ME.

GRANDSONS OF THE PROPHET (S), IMAM HASSAN & HUSSAIN, SAW AN OLD BEDOUIN PERFORMING HIS WUDHU.

BROTHER, HE'S DOING HIS WUDHU INCORRECTLY

HOW DO WE TELL HIM, WITHOUT HURTING HIS FEELINGS?

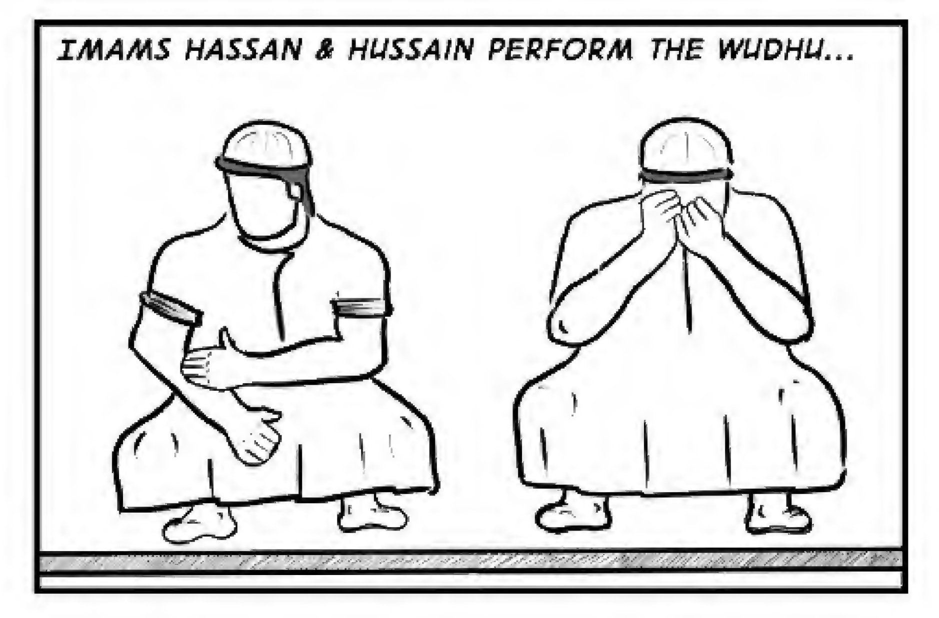
I HAVE A PLAN

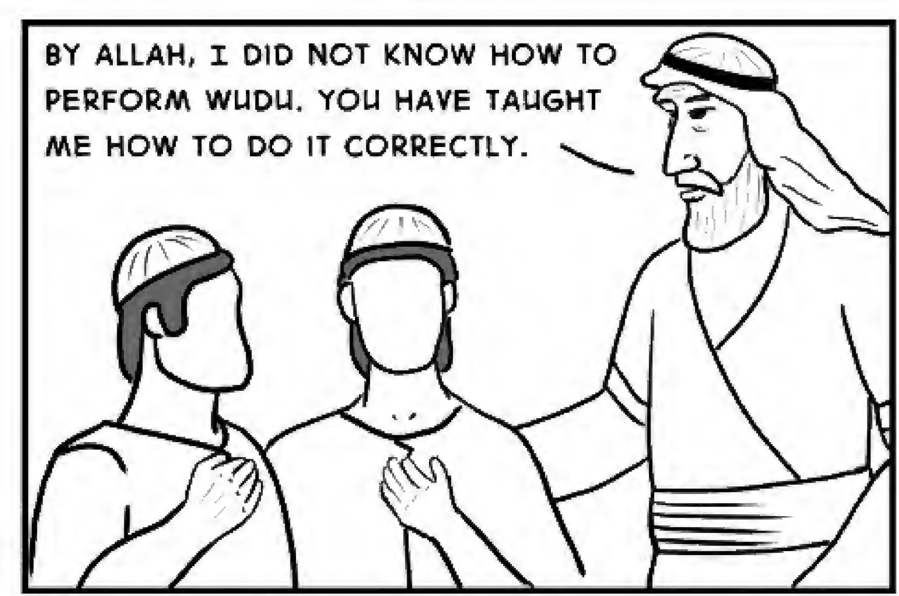
SIR, MY BROTHER AND I DISAGREE WHO PERFORMS WUDU THE BEST. WOULD YOU WATCH AND JUDGE WHO IS THE BEST ?

TEACHING BEAUTIFULLY

Sufi Comics

Arif & Ali





In the Qur'an

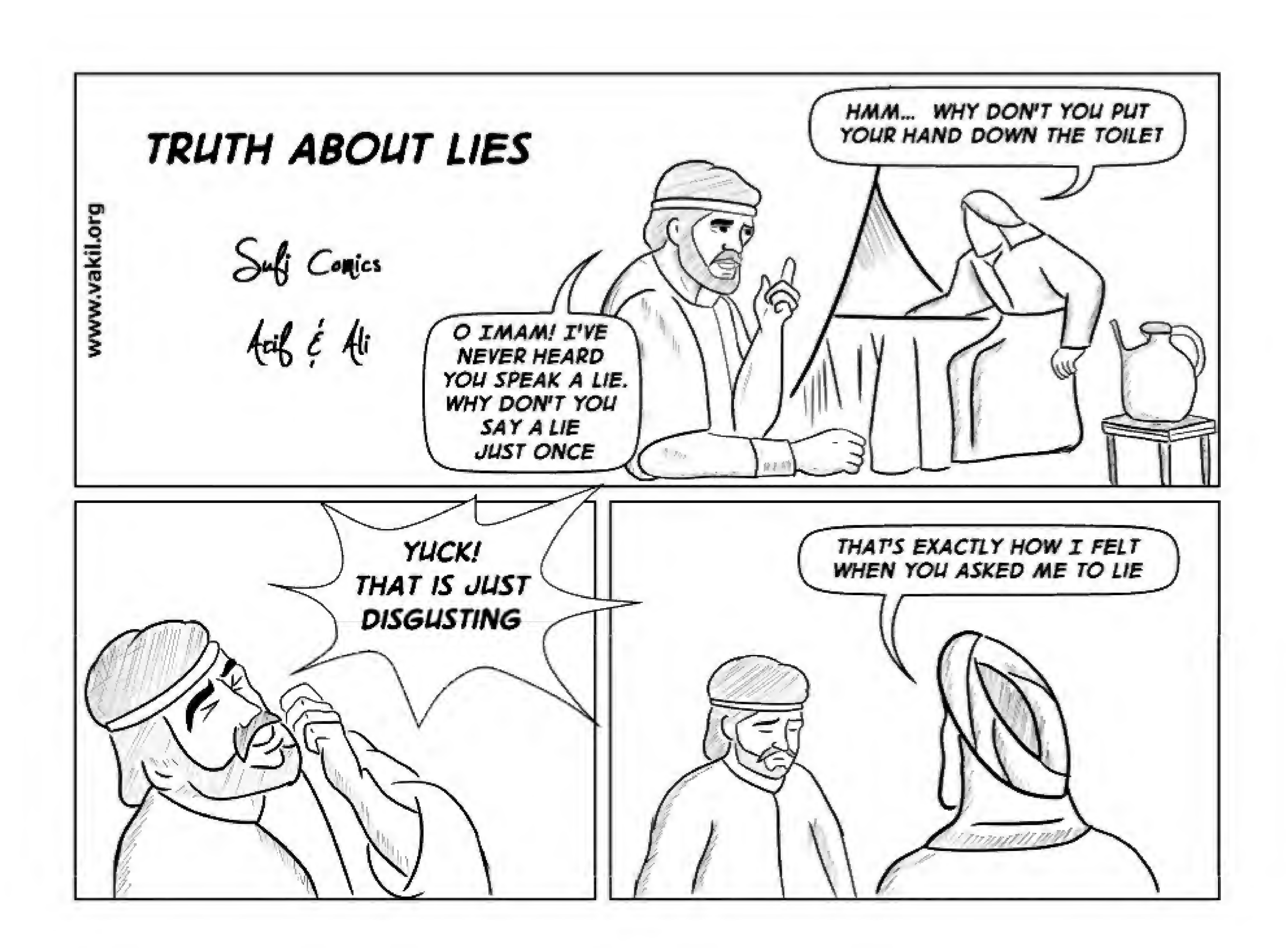
O you who believe! let not (one) people laugh at (another) people perchance they may be better than they, nor let women (laugh) at (other) women, perchance they may be better than they; and do not find fault with your own people nor call one another by nicknames; evil is a bad name after faith, and whoever does not turn, these it is that are the unjust. (49:11)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said, "Whoever does not have mercy on our young and does not honour our elderly is not one of us."

When the Prophet was asked who were the most beloved of Allah, he replied, "Those who help others the most."

Imam Jafar said, "Husayn (younger) would never walk in front of Hasan (elder) nor would he begin the conversation when they met, out of respect for him."


TRUTH ABOUT LIES
www.vakil.org
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
O IMAM! I'VE NEVER HEARD YOU SPEAK A LIE. WHY DON'T YOU SAY A LIE JUST ONCE
HMM... WHY DON'T YOU PUT YOUR HAND DOWN THE TOILET
YUCK! THAT IS JUST DISGUSTING
THAT'S EXACTLY HOW I FELT WHEN YOU ASKED ME TO LIE

In the Qur'an

O you who believe! avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do not spy nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful. (49:12)

In the Traditions

Imam Al-Baqir said, "When my father Ali ibn al-Husayn was close to death he drew me to his chest saying, 'O son give you the same advice as my father gave me, just as his father had given him the same advice: bear the truth patiently, even if it is bitter."

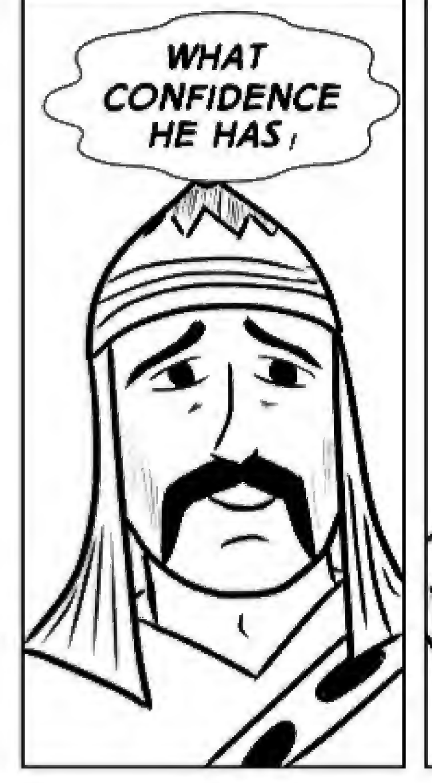
ARTIST'S NOTES: WHEN I HEARD THIS STORY, IT CHANGED THE WAY I LOOKED AT SINS. I REALIZED CERTAIN ACTS ARE SINS BECAUSE THOSE ACTIONS RESTRICT OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH. IF WE ARE ABLE TO REFLECT THE DAMAGE THAT SINS DO TO OUR SOUL, STAYING AWAY FROM THEM WILL BE AS NATURAL AS STAYING AWAY FROM SOMETHING THAT IS DISGUSTING.

FOLLOW PRINCIPLES













In the Qur'an

O you who believe! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness of Allah's sake, though it may be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives; if he be rich or poor, Allah is nearer to them both in compassion; therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate; and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allah is aware of what you do. (4:135)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said, "Islam is Good Manners"

Imam Jafar said, "A Muslim is he whose hand and tongue people feel safe from, whilst a believer is he whom people trust with their belongings and their lives."

ARTIST'S NOTES: SOMETIMES OUR LOVE FOR PERSONALITIES BLIND US FROM THE TRUTH. THE NAMES OF GOD REFLECT DIVINE PRINCIPLES, AND OUR ULTIMATE JOURNEY IS TOWARDS HIM. THEREFORE OUR GOAL SHOULD BE TO FOLLOW DIVINE PRINCIPLES. DOING SO, WILL HELP US TO SEE THE WORLD WITHOUT PREJUDICES & TAKE DECISIONS WITH CONFIDENCE.


GOOD INTENTIONS AND HARD WORK
Sufi Comics
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www.vakil.org
O IMAM JAFAR, YOU'RE FROM THE FAMILY OF THE PROPHET, AND YOU WEAR SUCH GOOD CLOTHES!
YES SO THAT THOSE PEOPLE DO NOT THINK THAT I AM A NEEDY AND DISTRESSED ONE.
LOOK YOU HAVE A SOFT DRESS UNDERNEATH YOUR ROUGHT ONE...
SO THAT YOU MAY DECEIVE OTHERS THAT YOU ARE A DEVOTED ASCETIC
THE NEXT DAY...
WHY ARE YOU PERSPIRING IN THIS OLD AGE? ARE YOU SO GREEDY OF THIS WORLD?
HOW HAPPY I WOULD BE IF I DIE AND MEET GOD IN THIS CONDITION, THAT I AM WORKING HARD SO THAT I DO NOT BECOME A BURDEN ON OTHER PEOPLE

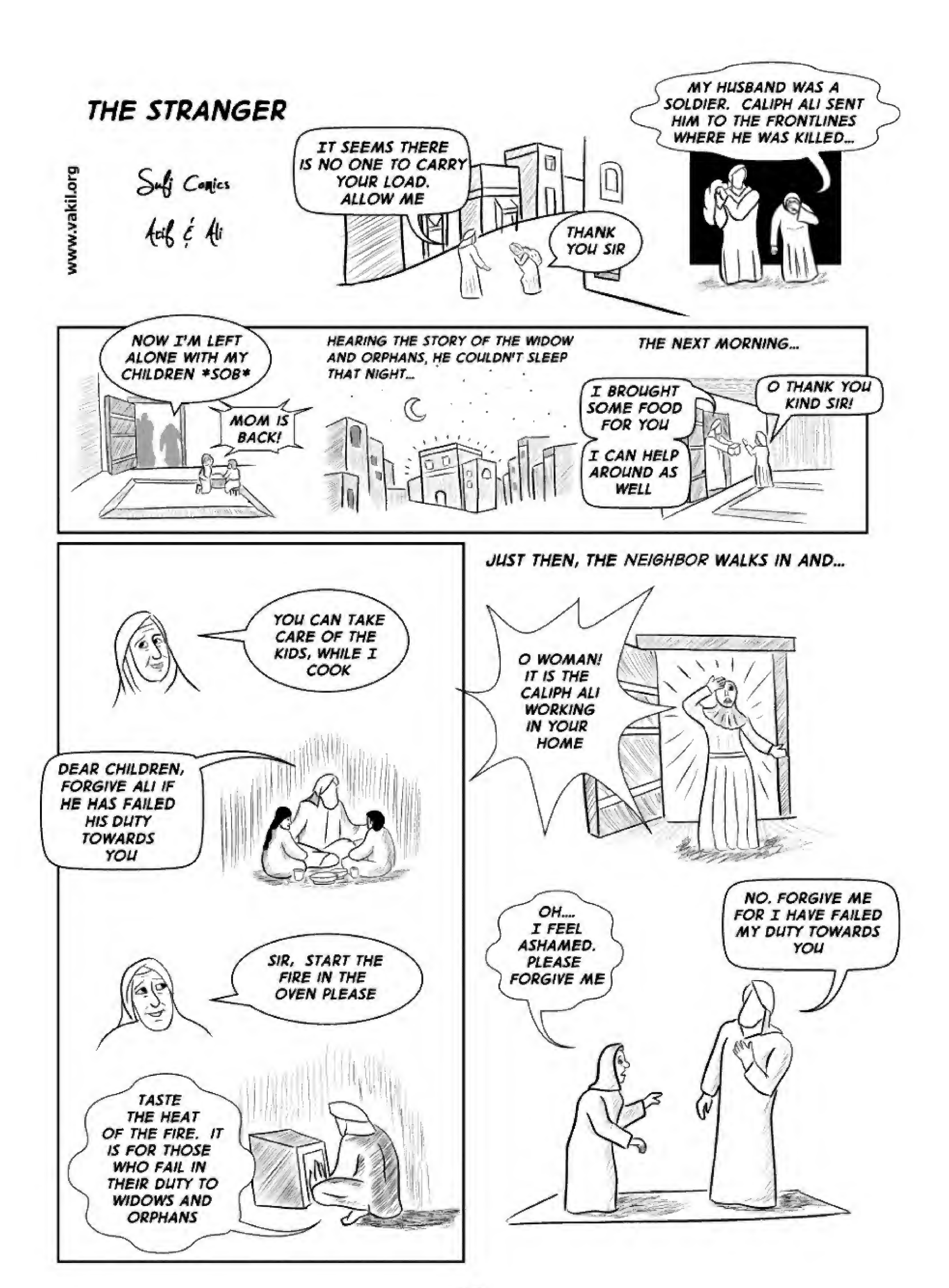
In the Qur'an

Allah will not call you to account for thoughtlessness in your oaths, but for the intention in your hearts; and He is Oft-forgiving, Most Forbearing. (2:225)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said, "Do not insult the world for it is the best mount for the believer, because by means of it he attains good and through it he is saved from evil."

Imam Ali said "The Hereafter is secured through the World."


THE STRANGER
www.vakil.org
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
IT SEEMS THERE IS NO ONE TO CARRY YOUR LOAD. ALLOW ME
THANK YOU SIR
MY HUSBAND WAS A SOLDIER. CALIPH ALI SENT HIM TO THE FRONTLINES WHERE HE WAS KILLED...
NOW I'M LEFT ALONE WITH MY CHILDREN *SOB*
MOM IS BACK!
HEARING THE STORY OF THE WIDOW AND ORPHANS, HE COULDN'T SLEEP THAT NIGHT...
THE NEXT MORNING...
I BROUGHT SOME FOOD FOR YOU
I CAN HELP AROUND AS WELL
O THANK YOU KIND SIR!
YOU CAN TAKE CARE OF THE KIDS, WHILE I COOK
DEAR CHILDREN, FORGIVE ALI IF HE HAS FAILED HIS DUTY TOWARDS YOU
SIR, START THE FIRE IN THE OVEN PLEASE
TASTE THE HEAT OF THE FIRE. IT IS FOR THOSE WHO FAIL IN THEIR DUTY TO WIDOWS AND ORPHANS
JUST THEN, THE NEIGHBOR WALKS IN AND...
O WOMAN! IT IS THE CALIPH ALI WORKING IN YOUR HOME
OH.... I FEEL ASHAMED. PLEASE FORGIVE ME
NO. FORGIVE ME FOR I HAVE FAILED MY DUTY TOWARDS YOU

In the Qur'an

And serve God and do not associate any thing with Him and be good to the parents and to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the neighbor of (your) kin and the alien neighbor, and the companion in a journey and the wayfarer and those whom your right hands possess; surely Allah does not love him who is proud, boastful; (4:36)

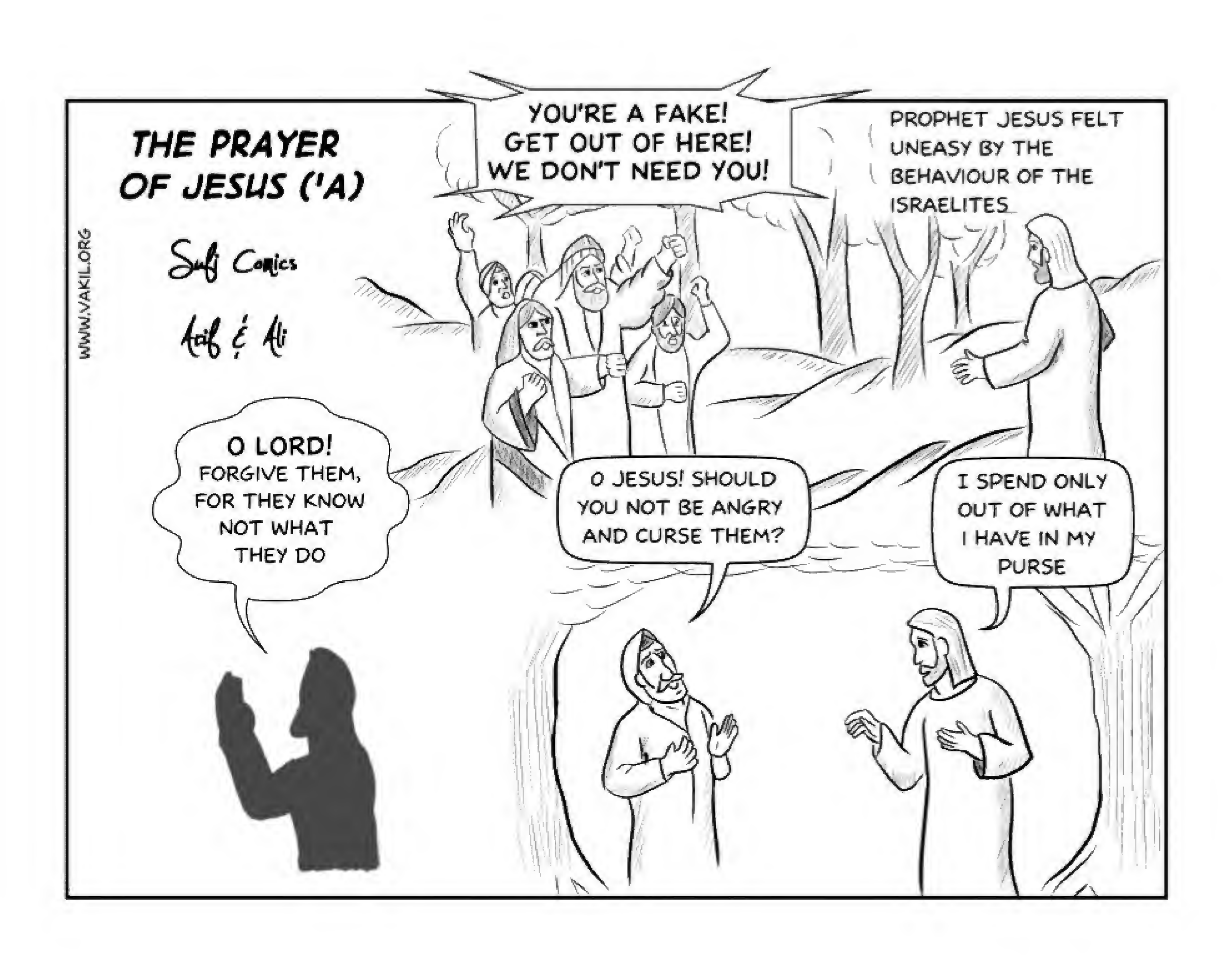
In the Traditions

Let it be known to you, Maalik, that I am sending you as a governor to a country which has seen many regimes before this. Some of them were benign, sympathetic and good, while others were tyrannical, oppressive and cruel. People will judge your regime as critically as you have studied the activities of other regimes and they will criticize you in the same way as you have censured or approved other rulers.

Maalik! You must create in your mind kindness, compassion and love for your subjects. Do not behave towards them as if you are a voracious and ravenous beast and as if your success lies in devouring them.

Remember, Maalik, that amongst your subjects there are two kinds of people: those who have the same religion as you have; they are brothers to you, and those who have religions other than that of yours, they are human beings like you. Men of either category suffer from the same weaknesses and disabilities that human beings are inclined to, they commit sins, indulge in vices either intentionally or foolishly and unintentionally without realizing the enormity of their deeds. Let your mercy and compassion come to their rescue and help in the same way and to the same extent that you expect Allah to show mercy and forgiveness to you.

Excerpt of letter by Imam Ali to Maalik Al-Astar



ARTIST'S NOTES: THE MORE I THINK ABOUT IT, THE MORE I REALIZE THAT THE WORLD AROUND US IS A REFLECTION OF OUR INNER SELF. NOTHING IS GOOD OR BAD OUTSIDE OF US, BUT WE MAKE IT SO THROUGH THE FILTER OF OUR WORLD VIEW. THIS IS A VERY DIFFERENT WAY OF LOOKING AT THE WORLD, AND MEANS IF WE WANT TO CHANGE THE WORLD, WE START BY CHANGING WHAT'S WITHIN OURSELVES. IF WE WANT TO RID THE WORLD OF POVERTY, WE NEED TO START BY REMOVING THE POVERTY OF LOVE IN OUR HEARTS.

In the Qur'an

"Behold! the angels said, 'Oh Mary! God gives you glad tidings of a Word from Him. His name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter, and in (the company of) those nearest to God. He shall speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. He shall be (in the company) of the righteous... And God will teach him the Book and Wisdom, the Law and the Gospel"' (3:45-48).

And the servants of the Beneficent Allah are they who walk on the earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant address them, they say: Peace. (25:63)

In the Traditions

Prophet Jesus said, "My servant is my own two hands; my riding beast is my two feet, my bed is the earth, my pillow is a rock, my warmth in the winter is the east of the earth. I sleep and I do not possess anything, and I wake up and I do not possess anything, but there is no one on the face of this earth richer than me."

The Prophet said "O Um Ayman! Did you not know that my brother Jesus never kept dinner for breakfast or breakfast for dinner? He would eat from the leaves of trees, drink from rainwater, wear hair-cloth, sleep whereever he was, and he would say, 'Every day comes with its own sustenance.' "


MOTHER
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
WWW.VAKIL.ORG
O PROPHET MUHAMMAD WHO HAS GREATER RIGHT OVER ME? MY MOTHER OR FATHER?
HE REPLIED:
YOUR MOTHER
AND THEN?
YOUR MOTHER
AND THEN?
"YOUR MOTHER AND THEN YOUR FATHER"
WHY DO YOU GIVE THE MOTHER THREE RIGHTS TO THE FATHER'S ONE?
THE PROPHET REPLIED:
YOUR MOTHER CARRIED YOU FOR NINE MONTHS, AND GAVE BIRTH TO YOU
SHE GAVE UP HER SLEEP, SUCKLED YOU, CARRIED AND CLEANED YOU
FOR YEARS SHE COOKED FOR YOU FED YOU, AND SERVED YOU FOOD
WHEN YOU WERE 40, 50, 60 SHE STILL FOLLOWED YOUR PROGRESS WITH INTEREST
COULD I REPAY HER FOR ALL THAT SHE'S DONE FOR ME?
"NOT EVEN ONE NIGHT'S DUE!"
SUPPOSE I CARRY HER ON MY BACK FOR YEARS!
.... COOK & FEED HER ...
CLEAN UP FOR HER
FOR AS LONG AS SHE LIVES!
THE PROPHET SAID:
"THERE WILL STILL BE THIS DIFFERENCE: YOUR MOTHER LOOKED FOR YOU TO LIVE, WHILE YOU ARE WAITING FOR HER TO DIE."

In the Quran

And we have enjoined man in respect of his parents (31:14)

And that ye be kind to your parents, Say not to them (so much as) 'Fie' nor chide them, but speak to them a generous word. (17:23)

In the Traditions

O God,
fill me with awe of my parents,
the awe one has toward a tyrannical sovereign,
and let me be devoted to them,
with the devotion of a compassionate mother!
Make my obedience and devotion to them
more gladdening to my eyes
than sleep to the drowsy
and more refreshing to my breast
than drink to the thirsty,
so that I may prefer their inclination
to my inclination,
set their satisfaction
before my satisfaction,
make much of their devotion to me
though it be little,
and make little of my devotion to them
though it be great.

Excerpt of Supplication for his Parents
by Imam Zainul Abideen


HOW FAR IS HEAVEN?
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
WWW.VAKIL.ORG
O IMAM ALI CAN YOU TELL US HOW FAR IS HEAVEN?
JUST TWO STEPS AWAY
WHICH TWO STEPS?
THE FIRST STEP IS ON YOUR NAFS (LOWER SELF / EGO) ...
EGO
... THE NEXT STEP IS IN HEAVEN

In the Qur'an

But as for him who is awed to stand before his Lord and forbids the soul from (following) desires, his refuge will indeed be paradise. (79:40-41)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said, "The most courageous of people is he who overcomes his desires."

The Prophet said, "A strong person is not one who overcomes people, but a strong person is one who overcomes his own self."

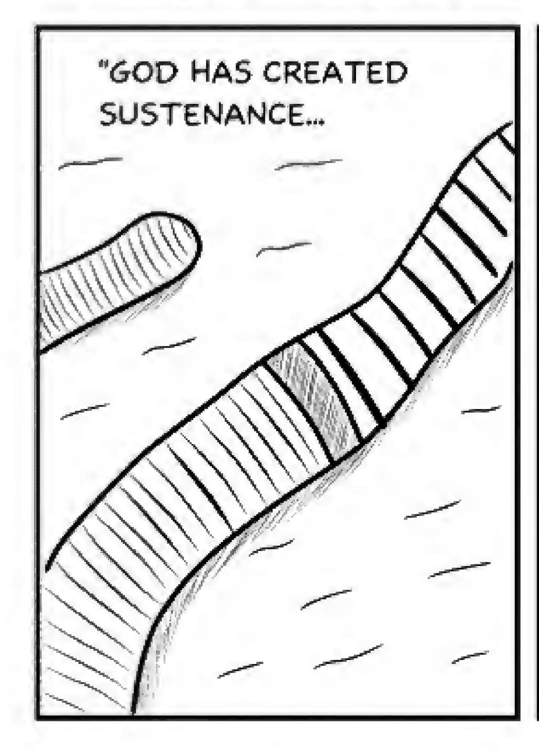
Imam Ali said, "Prohibiting one's self from desire is the greater Jihad."

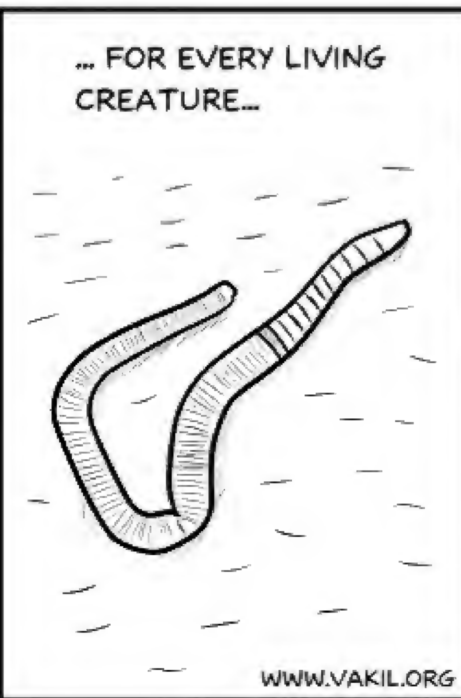
Prophet Solomon said, "Someone who prevails over his desires is stronger than he who captures a city by himself."

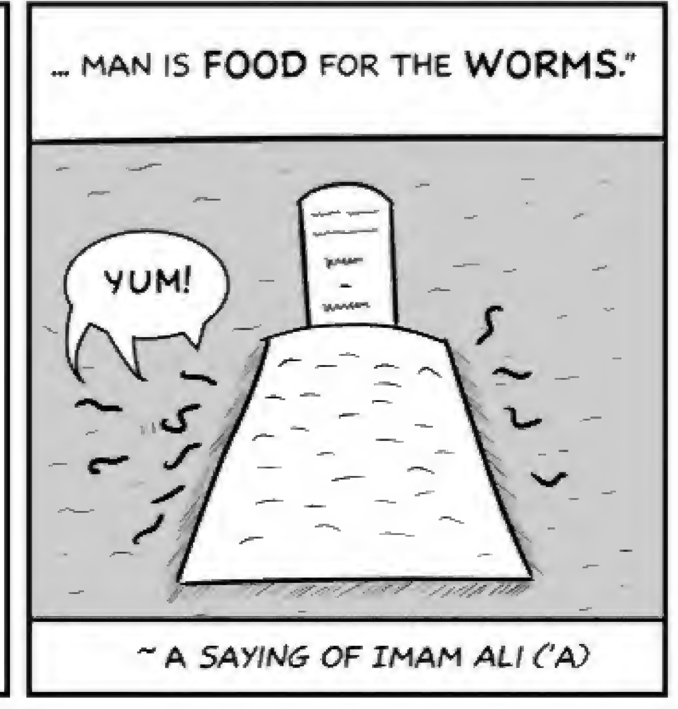
Spirituality

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Sufi Comics Arif & Ali







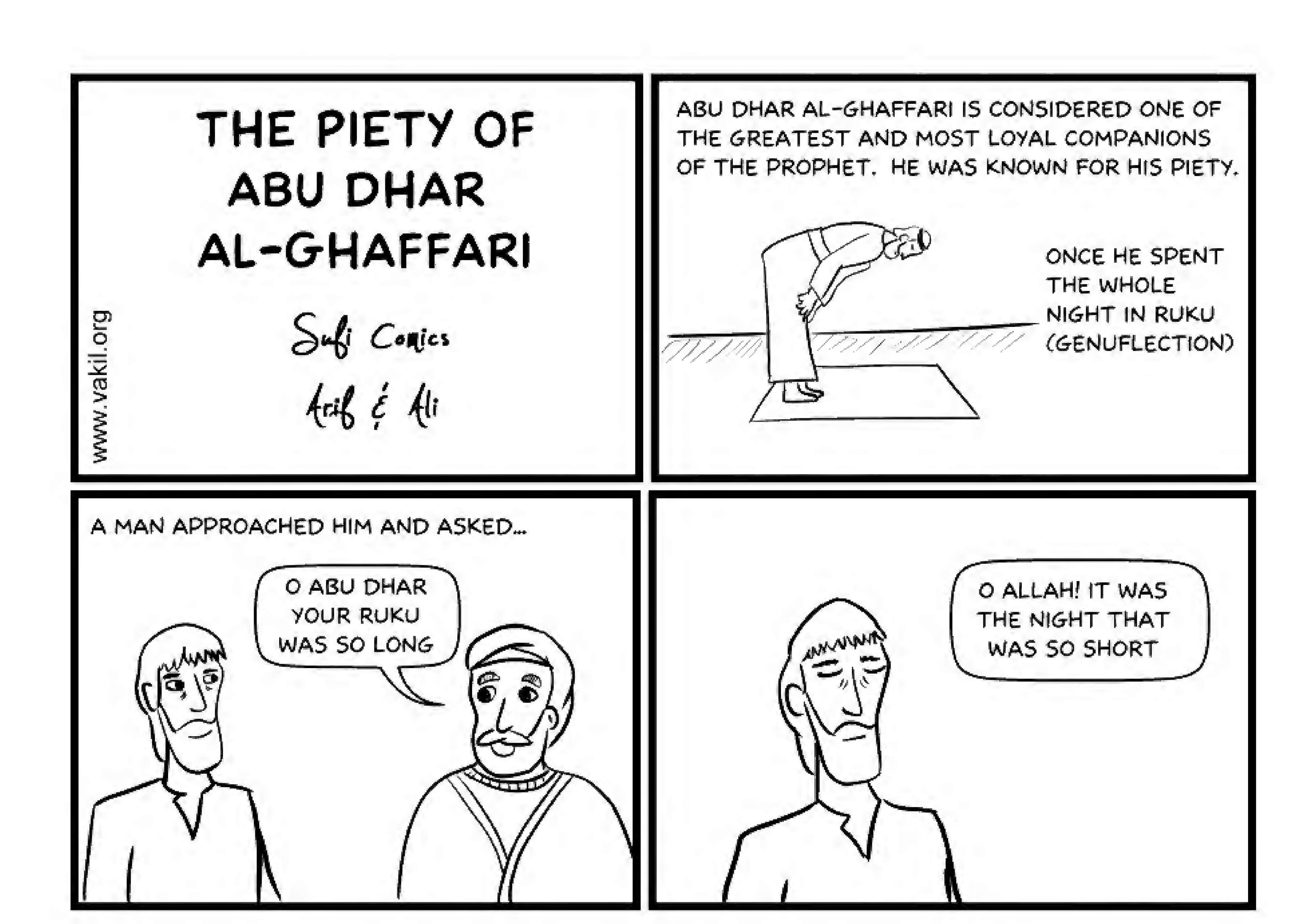
In the Qur'an

Say (as for) the death from which you flee, that will surely overtake you, then you shall be sent back to the Knower of the unseen and the seen (62:8)

In the Traditions

The Holy Prophet said, "Remember the destroyer of pleasures." When asked what that was, he replied, "Death. Whenever one of Allah's servants remembers this when he is wealthy, this world is constricted for him. Whenever he remembers it in hardship, it is expanded for him."

Imam Ali said "Wash the dead and your heart will be moved, for surely an empty body is a profound lesson"



ARTIST'S NOTES: SOMETIMES WHEN I HAVE TO GO FOR PRAYER, I FEEL IT'S LIKE A CHORE. THEN I THINK TO MYSELF, DOES WORSHIPING GOD HAVE TO BE A BURDEN? CAN IT NOT BE A PLEASURABLE ACTIVITY THAT ONE LOOKS FORWARD TO? HOW IS IT THAT SOME PEOPLE LIKE ABU DHAR CAN SPEND A WHOLE NIGHT IN PRAYER? THEN I REALIZE THE PROBLEM IS IN THE WAY I'M LOOKING AT PRAYER. HOW CAN ONE NOT LOOK FORWARD TO PRAYER, WHEN GOD INVITES YOU TO HIS DOMAIN IN THE DARK OF THE NIGHT TO HAVE A PRIVATE CONVERSATION?

In the Qur'an

And keep up prayer in the two parts of the day and in the first hours of the night (11:114)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said, "The most noble of my community are those who carry the Qur'an in their hearts, and those who stand in prayer at night."

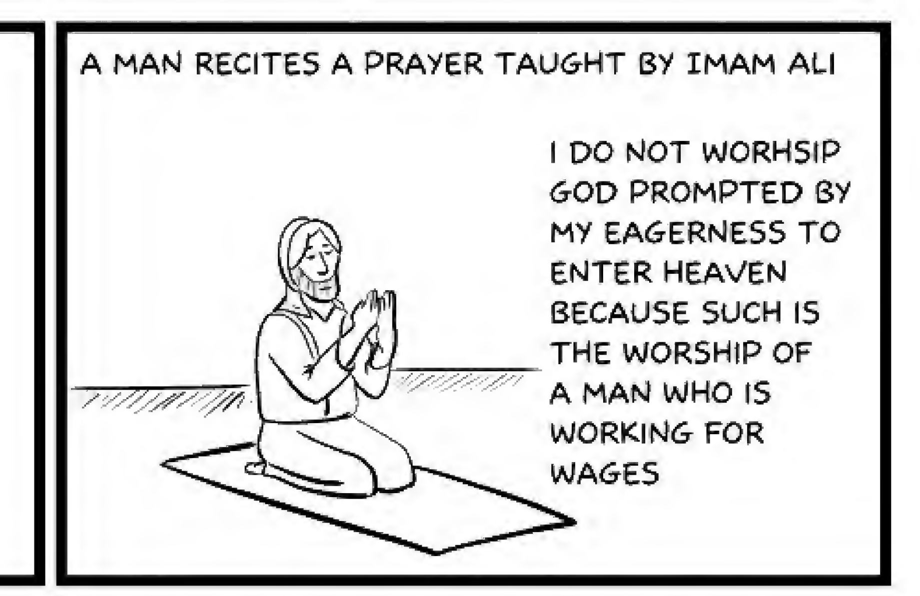
The Prophet said, 'Surely Allah will place light in the heart of the slave who retires with his Master in the deepest darkness of the night, conversing with Him in prayer; and if he says, "O Lord" then Allah will call out to him saying, "At your service, my slave: whatever you ask of Me, I will surely give you, and if you rely on Me then I will be enough for you.". Then He will say to the angles, "My angels, look at My slave - he retires alone with Me in the deepest darkness of the night while the misguided are playing and the negligent are sleeping. Bear witness that I have forgiven him."

THE WORSHIP OF FREE MEN

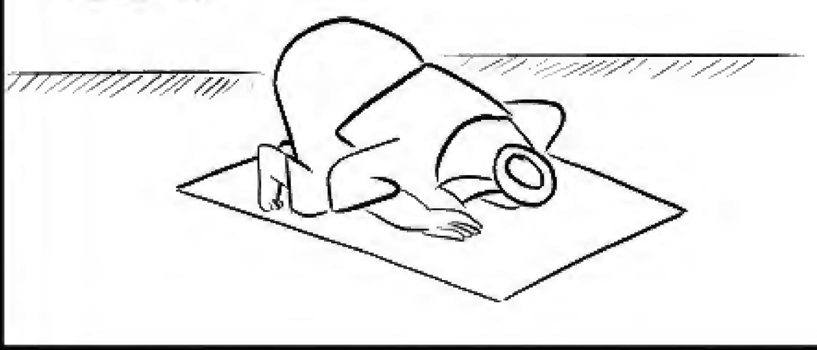
Sufi Comics

Arif & Ali

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ARTIST'S NOTES: THIS SAYING OF IMAM ALI (AS) HAS BEEN AN EYE OPENER FOR ME. AFTER READING IT, I REALIZED THAT HEAVEN & HELL ARE JUST INCENTIVES FOR US TO DO GOOD AND STAY AWAY FROM EVIL. THE REAL GOAL IS GOD HIMSELF.

In the Qur'an

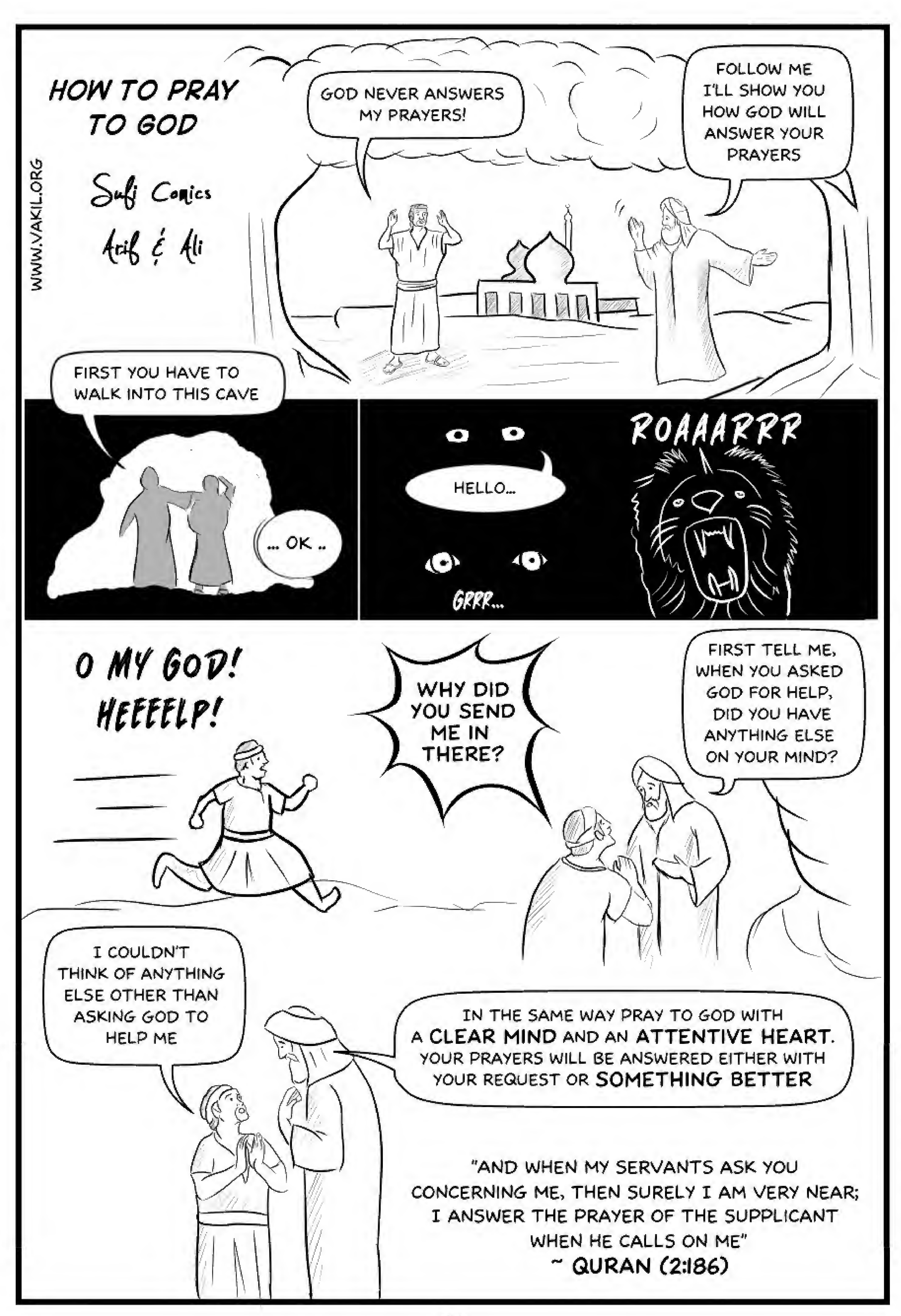
And those who patiently persevere, seeking the pleasure of their Lord, and keep up prayer and spend (benevolently) out of what We have given them secretly and openly and repel evil with good; as for those, they shall have the (happy) issue of the abode (13:22)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said, "Man is with whom he loves. Whoever loves a bondsman in Allah, loves Allah. No one loves Allah except he whom Allah loves."

My God,
were it not incumbent to accept Thy command,
I would declare Thee far too exalted for me to remember Thee,
for I remember Thee in my measure,
not in Thy measure,
and my scope can hardly reach the point
where I may be a locus for calling Thee holy!
Among Thy greatest favours to us
is the running of Thy remembrance across our tongues
and Thy permission to us
to supplicate Thee,
declare Thee exalted,
and call Thee holy!

Excerpt of the Whispered Prayer of the Rememberers
by Imam Zainul Abideen


HOW TO PRAY TO GOD
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
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GOD NEVER ANSWERS MY PRAYERS!
FOLLOW ME I'LL SHOW YOU HOW GOD WILL ANSWER YOUR PRAYERS
FIRST YOU HAVE TO WALK INTO THIS CAVE
... OK ..
HELLO...
GRRR...
ROAAARRR
O MY GOD! HEEEELP!
WHY DID YOU SEND ME IN THERE?
FIRST TELL ME, WHEN YOU ASKED GOD FOR HELP, DID YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE ON YOUR MIND?
I COULDN'T THINK OF ANYTHING ELSE OTHER THAN ASKING GOD TO HELP ME
IN THE SAME WAY PRAY TO GOD WITH A CLEAR MIND AND AN ATTENTIVE HEART. YOUR PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED EITHER WITH YOUR REQUEST OR SOMETHING BETTER
"AND WHEN MY SERVANTS ASK YOU CONCERNING ME, THEN SURELY I AM VERY NEAR; I ANSWER THE PRAYER OF THE SUPPLICANT WHEN HE CALLS ON ME"
~ QURAN (2:186)

In the Qur'an

Woe to those who pray but who are unmindful of their prayers (107:4-5)

Establish the prayer for My remembrance (20:14)

Do not be amongst those who are unmindful (7:205)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said, "Know that Allah does not answer supplication from a heedless and distracted heart."

The Prophet said, "Seize the opportunity to supplicate during tenderness (of heart) for verily it is a mercy."

The Prophet said, "Whoever prays two cycles of prayer, and does not allow his mind to wander to the affairs of this world, will be forgiven for the wrong action he has committed earlier."

Imam Ali said, "Cajole your soul tactfully to worship, and be gentle with it and do not force it. Make allowances for both its weariness and its activity, except for the daily obligations that are incumbent upon it, for it must fulfil them and undertake them at their prescribed times."

THE RECIPE FOR CURING ALL SINS

Sufi Comics

Arif & Ali

IMAM ALI ONCE SAW A DIGNIFIED DOCTOR SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE, DISPENSING CURES OF ILLS FOR THEM.





IMAM ALI ASKED HIM A SECOND TIME, AND THEN A THIRD TIME, THE DOCTOR REPLIED



YES HERE IT IS.
GO TO THE GARDEN
OF IMAN (FAITH & TRUST)
AND EXTRACT FROM IT:

THE ROOTS OF INTENTION,
THE GRAINS OF REPENTANCE,
THE LEAVES OF REFLECTION
THE FRUIT OF UNDERSTANDING,,
THE BRANCES OF CERTAINTY,
THE KERNELS OF SINCERITY,
THE BARK OF DILIGENCE,
THE ROOTS OF TRUSTFUL DEPENDENCE,
THE CALYX OF TAKING HEED
THE STEP OF RETURNING



TAKE ALL THESE REMEDIES WITH A KNOWLEDGEABLE HEART AND FINGERS OF CONFIRMATION AND PALM OF SUCCESS. THM PUT THEM ALL IN A BLOW OF REALIZATION AND WASH THEM ALL WITH THE WATER OF TEARS.

NEXT PLACE THEM IN THE POT OF HOPE AND SET IT ON THE FIRE OF YEARNING UNTIL YOU SEE THE CREAM OF WISDOM FLOAT UP.

THEN POUT THE CONTENTS ONTO PLATES OF CONTENTMENT, AND COOL THEM WITH THE FAN OF SEEKING FORGIVENESS.

THERE YOU WILL HAVE A PERFECT DRINK AS A PERFECT GIFT FROM ALLAH, GLORY BE TO HIM, WHICH WILL REMOVE ALL YOUR SINS.



In the Qur'an

Surely Allah loves those who turn much to Him (in repentance), and He loves those who purify themselves (2:222)

But if they repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, they are your brethren in faith (9:11)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said, "Allah is more delighted when a slave turns to Him than when a man finds his riding-beast and provisions after they have gone astray during a dark night."

The Prophet said, "There is nothing more beloved to Allah than a youth who turns to Him"

Imam Ali said, "All good is contained in 3 things: your looking, your silence and your speech. Looking without reflection is negligence, silence without meditation is unmindfulness, and speech without remembrance is idle talk. Happiness will be theirs whose looking is a lesson, whose silence is meditation, whose speech is remembrance, who weep because of their mistakes and by whose hand people are safe from evil."

SECRETS OF PRAYER TAUGHT BY IMAM JAFAR SADIQ (AS)

Sufi Comics - Arif & Ali

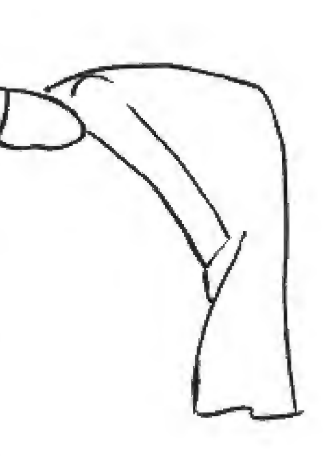
OPENING THE PRAYER

WHEN YOU FACE THE QIBLAH, YOU SHOULD DESPAIR OF THIS WORLD, WHAT IT CONTAINS OF CREATION AND WHAT OTHERS ARE OCCUPIED WITH. EMPTY YOUR HEART OF EVERY PREOCCUPATION WHICH MIGHT DISTRACT YOU FROM ALLAH. SEE THE IMMENSITY OF ALLAH WITH YOUR INNERMOST BEING, AND REMEMBER THAT YOU WILL STAND BEFORE HIM. KNOW THAT ALLAH DOES NOT NEED YOUR SERVICE. HE IS INDEPENDENT OF YOU, YOUR WORSHIP AND YOUR SUPPLICATION.



BOWING IN PRAYER

THE BONDSMAN OF ALLAH DOES NOT TRULY BOW (IN RUKU') BUT THAT ALLAH ADORNS HIM WITH THE LIGHT OF HIS RADIANCE, SHADES HIM IN THE SHADE OF HIS GREATNESS AND CLOTHES HIM IN THE GARMENT OF HIS PURITY. BOWING IS FIRST AND PROSTRATION (SUJUD) IS SECOND: THERE IS COURTESY IN BOWING, AND IN PROSTRATION NEARNESS TO ALLAH. WHOEVER IS NOT GOOD IN THE COURTESY IS NOT FIT FOR NEARNESS.



PROSTRATION IN PRAYER

ALLAH MADE PROSTRATION THE OCCASION TO DRAW NEAR TO HIM IN ONE'S HEART, INNERMOST BEING AND SPIRIT. WHOEVER DRAWS NEAR TO HIM IS FAR FROM ALL THAT IS OTHER THAN HIM.



DO YOU NOT SEE THAT IN ITS OUTWARD APPEARANCE THE STATE OF PROSTRATIONS IS NOT COMPLETE EXCEPT BY DISAPPEARING FROM ALL THINGS AND BEING VEILED FROM ALL THAT THE EYES SEE? THUS DOES ALLAH WANT THE INWARD BEING TO BE. IF SOMEONE'S HEART IS ATTACHED TO SOMETHING OTHER THAN ALLAH IN PRAYER, HE IS NEAR TO THAT THING, AND FAR FROM THE REALITY OF WHAT ALLAH DESIRES IN HIS PRAYER.

SALAM (PEACE)

THE MEANING OF THE TASLIM (GREETING OF PEACE) AT THE END OF THE PRAYER MEANS SECURITY, THAT IS, ANYONE WHO CARRIES OUT THE COMMAND OF ALLAH AND THE SUNNAH OF HIS PROPHET OUT OF HUMILITY TO HIM AND SHOWING FEAR, HAS SECURITY FROM THE TRIBULATIONS OF THIS WORLD AND FREEDOM FROM THE PUNISHMENT OF THE NEXT WORLD.



AL-SALAM (PEACE) IS ONE OF THE NAMES OF ALLAH, WHICH HE ENTRUSTED TO HIS CREATION SO THAT THEY WOULD MAKE USE OF IT IN THEIR BEHAVIOUR, TRUSTS AND CONTRACTS; IN CONFIRMING THEIR COMPANIES AND ASSEMBLIES; AND FOR THE SOUNDNESS OF THEIR SOCIAL RELATIONS.

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In the Qur'an

When my servants ask you about Me, (tell them that) I am indeed most near. I answer the supplicant's call when he calls Me. So let them respond to Me, and let them have faith in Me, so that they may fare rightly. (2:186)

In the Traditions

My God,
the uninterrupted flow of Thy graciousness
hast distracted me from thanking Thee!
The flood of Thy bounty has rendered me incapable
of counting Thy praises!
The succession of Thy kind acts has diverted me
from mentioning Thee in laudation!
The continuous rush of Thy benefits has thwarted me
from spreading the news of Thy gentle favours!
This is the station of him who
confesses to the lavishness of favours,
meets them with shortcomings,
and witnesses to his own disregard and negligence.
Thy favours are many -
my understanding falls short of grasping them,
not to speak of exhausting them!
So how can I achieve thanksgiving?
For my thanking Thee requires thanksgiving.
Whenever I say, 'To Thee belongs praise!',
it becomes thereby incumbent upon me to say,
'To Thee belongs praise'!

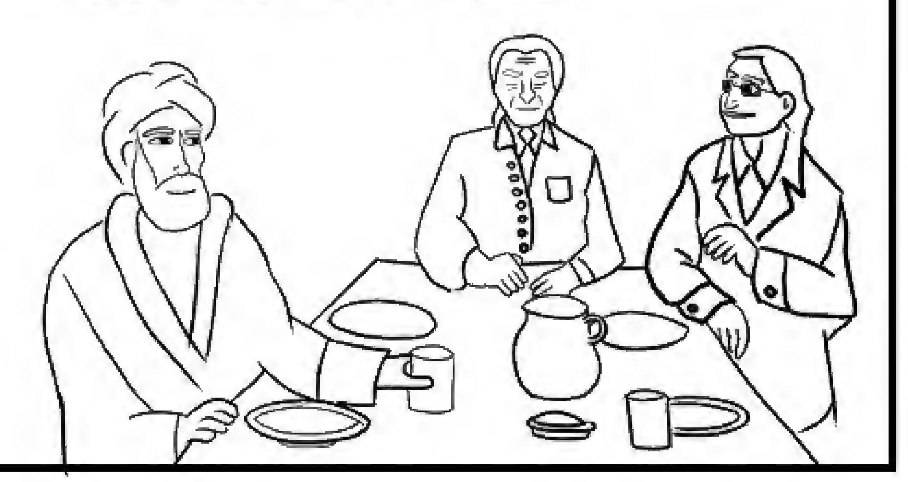
Excerpt of the Whispered Prayer of the Thankful
by Imam Zainul Abideen

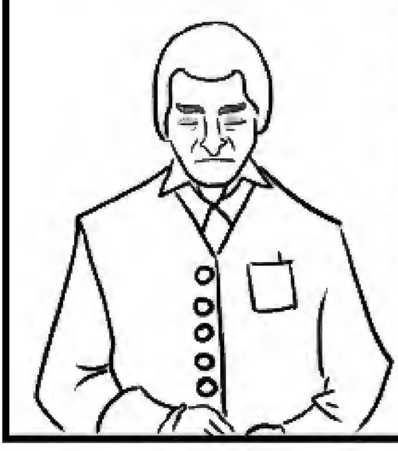
THE POWER OF PRAYERS

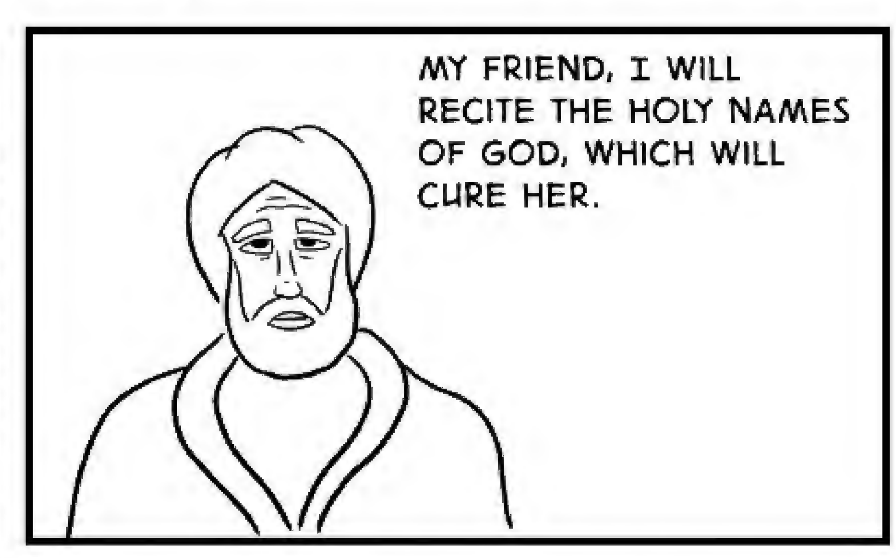
Sufi Comics

Arif & Ali

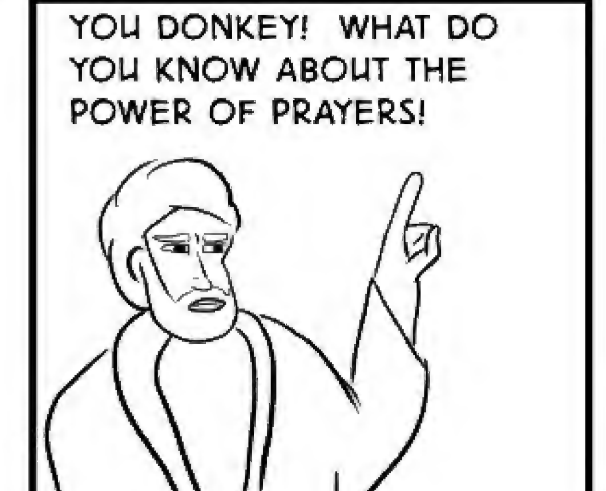
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In the Qur'an

Say: call uopon Allah or call upon the Beneficent; whichever you call upon, He has the best names. (17:110)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said: "As for prayer, it is the essense of worship."

O He who
gives to a servant
who asks from Him,
takes him to his wish
when he expectantly hopes for what is with Him,
brings him near and close
when he approaches Him,
covers over his sin and cloaks it
when he shows it openly,
and satisfies and suffices him
when he has confidence in Him!

Excerpt of The Whispered Prayer of the Thankful
by Imam Zainul Abideen





ARTIST'S NOTES: PHILOSOPHERS DEBATE ON WHAT IS THE FUNDAMENTAL NATURE OF REALITY. IF WE BELIEVE THAT THE MATERIAL WORLD IS ALL THAT EXISTS, THEN OUR VALUE SYSTEM IS BASED ON MATERIAL OBJECTS. IF WE THINK DEEPLY, WE'LL SEE THAT THE MATERIAL WORLD IS ONLY A SHADOW OF THE REAL WORLD. IN THE REAL WORLD WHAT REALLY MATTERS ARE DIVINE VALUES SUCH AS TRUTH, LOVE, PEACE AND GROWTH. GREAT LEADERS IN HISTORY UNDERSTOOD THIS, AND HAVE USED IT TO DRIVE POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGE IN SPITE OF MATERIAL FORCES AGAINST THEM.

In the Qur'an

And whatever wealth you spend, it is for your own benefit (2:272)

Those of you who have faith and spend (in Allah's way) there is a great reward for them (57:7)

You will never attain piety until you spend out of what you hold dear, and whatever you may spend of anything Allah indeed knows it. (3:92)

In the Traditions

Imam Ali in his will to his son said, "You have in your world that with which you can reform your (eternal) abode, so spend rightfully and do not be a storage place for other's (dues)."



ARTIST'S NOTES: THE WUDHU (ABLUTION) IS OFTEN DONE AS A MINDLESS EXERCISE. BUT WHEN I RECALL THIS STORY IT BRINGS BACK MY ATTENTION TO THE ACT OF PERFORMING THE WUDHU. THE PROPHET HAS SAID THAT ONE OF THE SECRETS TO BE ATTENTIVE IN PRAYER, IS TO PERFORM THE ABLUTION WITH AWARENESS, REMINDING OURSELVES WHOM WE ARE PREPARING TO APPROACH.

In the Qur'an

And keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and bow sown with those who bow down... And see assistance through patience and prayer, and most surely this is most difficult except for the humble ones. (2:43-45)

In the Traditions

My God,

who is the one who has come before Thee

seeking hospitality,

and whom Thou hast not received hospitably?

Who is the one who has dismounted at Thy door

hoping for magnanimity,

and to whom Thou hast not shown it?

Is it good that I come back from Thy door,

turned away in disappointment,

while I know of no patron qualified by beneficence but Thee?

How should I have hope in other than Thee,

when the good - all of it - is in Thy hand?

How should I expect from others,

when Thine are the creation and the command?

Should I cut off my hope for Thee,

when Thou hast shown me of Thy bounty

that for which I have not asked?

Wouldst Thou make me have need for my like?

But I hold fast to Thy cord!

O He through whose mercy

the strivers reach felicity

Excerpt of the Whispered prayer of the Hopeful
by Imam Zainul Abideen


A SLAVE'S SLAVE
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
A SULTAN WAS RIDING THROUGH THE COUNTRY. EVERYBODY BOWED AS THE SULTAN PASSED... EXCEPT FOR ONE MAN
WHY DON'T YOU BOW DOWN TO ME?
A FREE MAN SHOULD NOT BOW TO A SLAVE
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YOU ARE A SLAVE TO GREED & ANGER
I MADE THEM MY SLAVES, AND BECAME FREE
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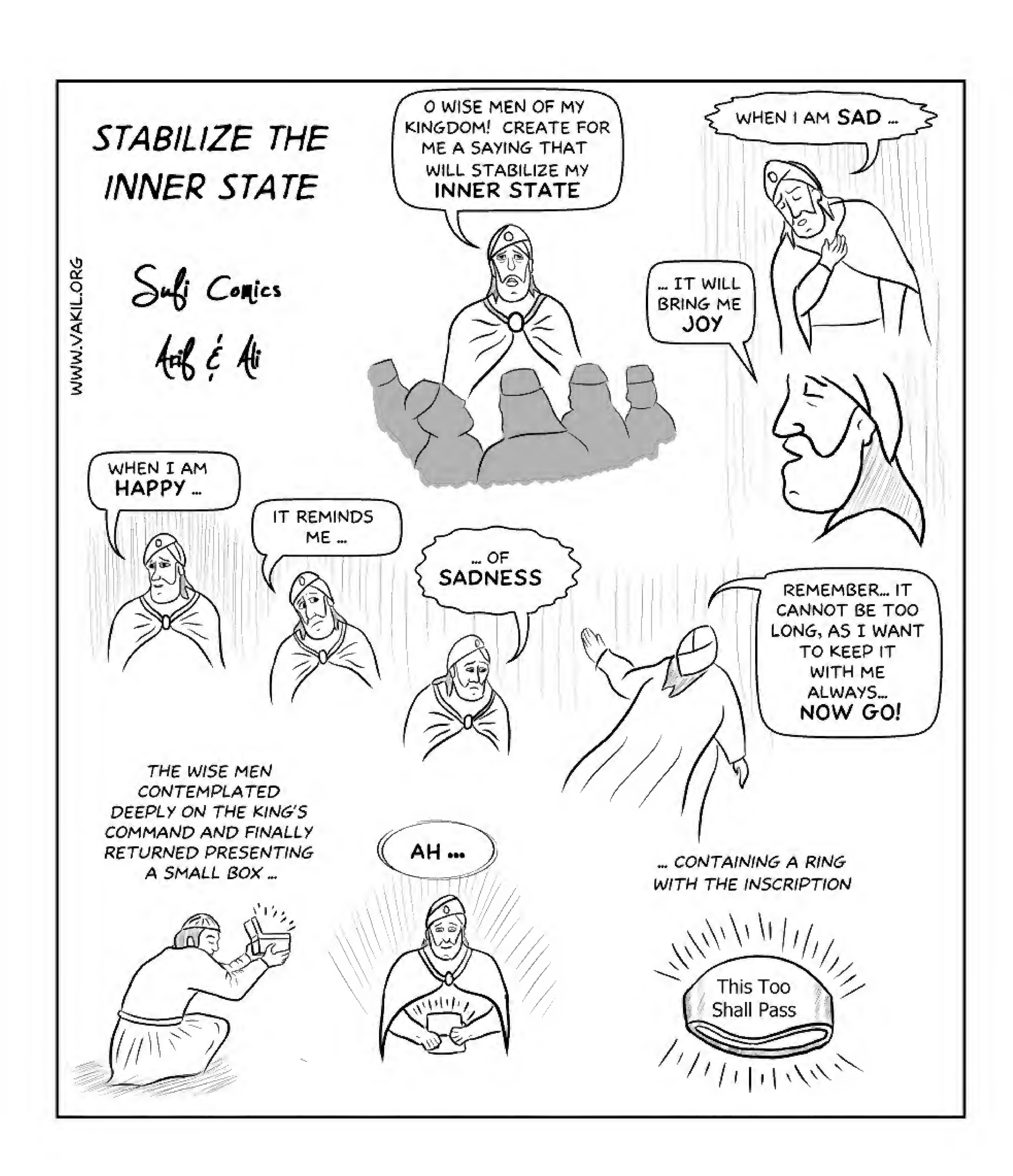
In the Qur'an

Successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers (23:1-2)

In the Traditions

O God,
bless Muhammad and his Household,
delight my soul through Thy decree,
expand my breast through the instances of Thy decision,
give to me a trust through which I may admit
that Thy decree runs only to the best,
and let my gratitude to Thee
for what Thou hast taken away from me
be more abundant than my gratitude to Thee
for what Thou hast conferred upon me!
Preserve me from imagining any meanness
in someone who is destitute
or imagining any superiority
in someone who possesses wealth,
for the noble is he
whom obedience to Thee has ennobled
and the exalted is he
whom worship of Thee has exalted!

Excerpt of Supplication In Satisfaction with the Decree
by Imam Zainul Abideen


STABILIZE THE INNER STATE
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
WWW.VAKIL.ORG
O WISE MEN OF MY KINGDOM! CREATE FOR ME A SAYING THAT WILL STABILIZE MY INNER STATE
WHEN I AM SAD ...
... IT WILL BRING ME JOY
WHEN I AM HAPPY ...
IT REMINDS ME ...
... OF SADNESS
REMEMBER... IT CANNOT BE TOO LONG, AS I WANT TO KEEP IT WITH ME ALWAYS... NOW GO!
THE WISE MEN CONTEMPLATED DEEPLY ON THE KING'S COMMAND AND FINALLY RETURNED PRESENTING A SMALL BOX ...
AH ...
... CONTAINING A RING WITH THE INSCRIPTION
This Too Shall Pass

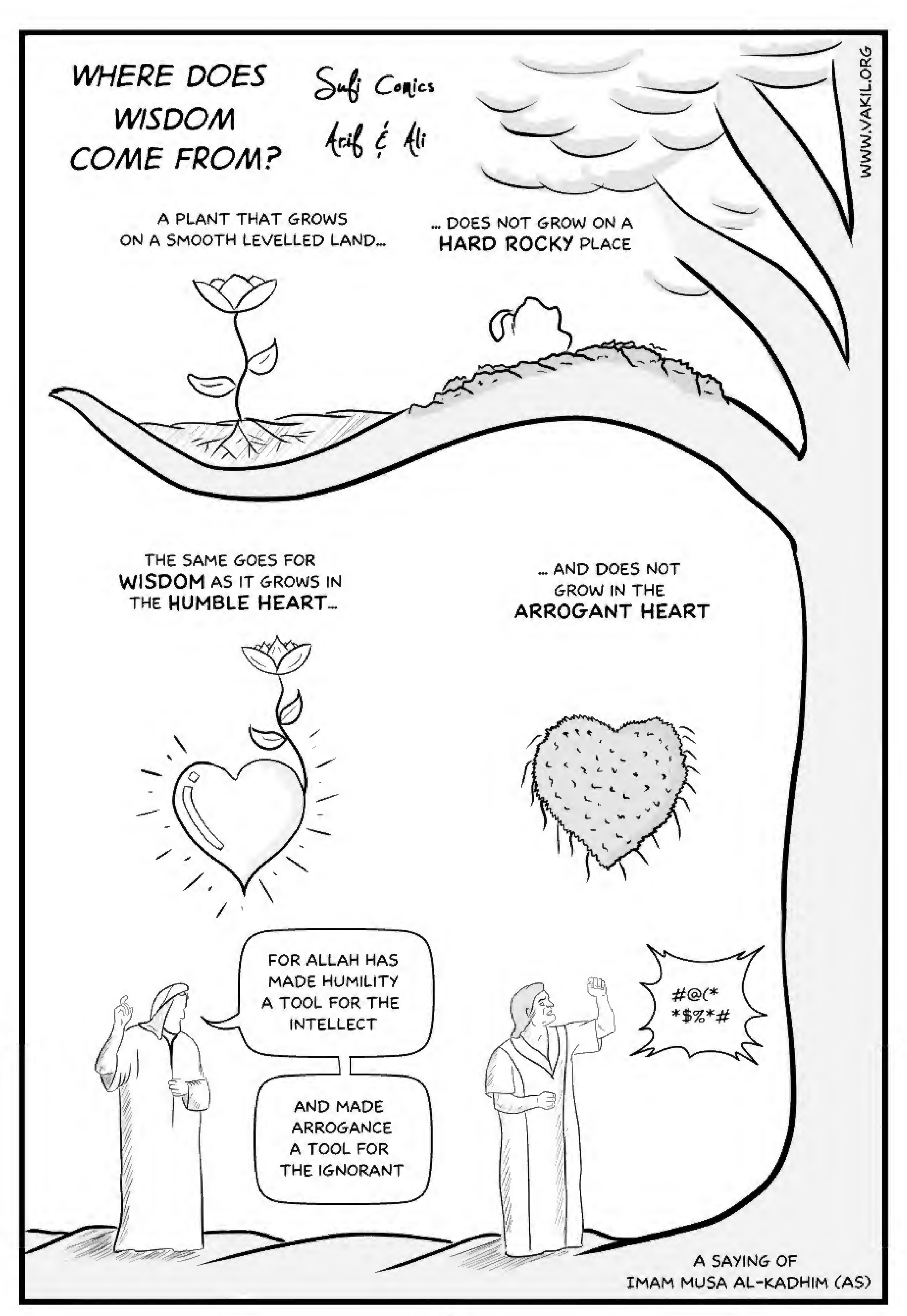
In the Qur'an

And verity in the remembrance of Allah do the hearts find rest (13:28)

In the Traditions

Imam Ali said, "I searched for wealth and I did not find it other than through contentment. Adhere to contentment and you will become rich."

Imam Al-Hadi said, "The thankful person prospers more as a result of his thanks than as a result of the bounty which incited the thanks, because bounties are sources of delight (in this world), whereas to thank brings bounties in this world and the hereafter."


WHERE DOES WISDOM COME FROM?
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
WWW.VAKIL.ORG
A PLANT THAT GROWS ON A SMOOTH LEVELLED LAND...
... DOES NOT GROW ON A HARD ROCKY PLACE
THE SAME GOES FOR WISDOM AS IT GROWS IN THE HUMBLE HEART...
... AND DOES NOT GROW IN THE ARROGANT HEART
FOR ALLAH HAS MADE HUMILITY A TOOL FOR THE INTELLECT
AND MADE ARROGANCE A TOOL FOR THE IGNORANT
#@(* *$%*#
A SAYING OF IMAM MUSA AL-KADHIM (AS)

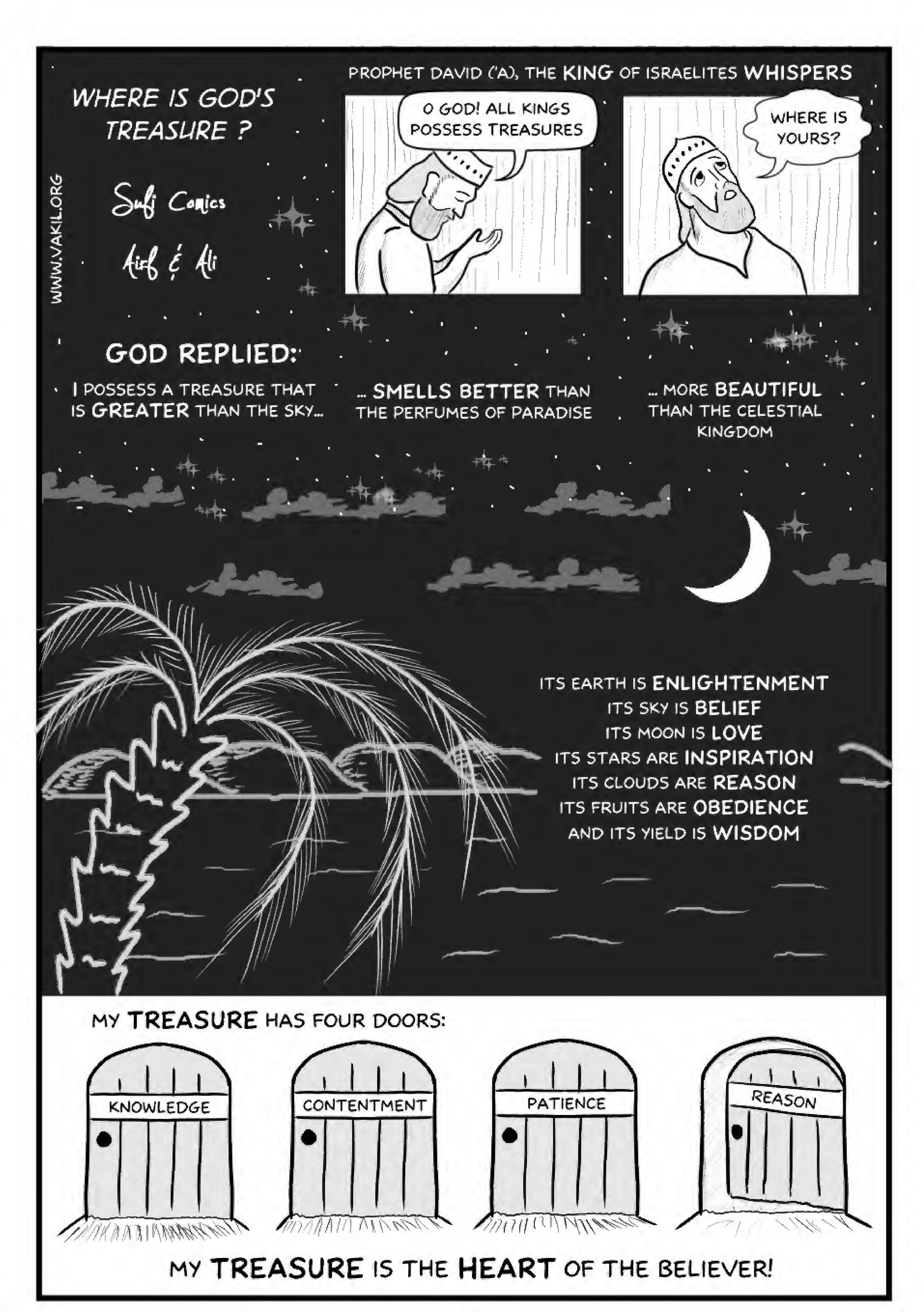
In the Qur'an

Indeed, those who are near your Lord are not prevented by arrogance from His worship, and they exalt Him, and to Him they prostrate. (7:206)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said to some of his companions, 'Why is it that I do not see sweetness in your worship?' When they asked him what sweetness of worship was, he replied, 'Humility'.

The Prophet said, "Good fortune is theirs who are humble - but not through poverty, who spend of their wealth which they have gained lawfully, who have mercy on the abased and poor and who keep company with the scholars of law and the wise."



WHERE IS GOD'S TREASURE ?
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
WWW.VAKIL.ORG
PROPHET DAVID ('A), THE KING OF ISRAELITES WHISPERS
O GOD! ALL KINGS POSSESS TREASURES
WHERE IS YOURS?
GOD REPLIED:
I POSSESS A TREASURE THAT IS GREATER THAN THE SKY...
... SMELLS BETTER THAN THE PERFUMES OF PARADISE
... MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN THE CELESTIAL KINGDOM
ITS EARTH IS ENLIGHTENMENT
ITS SKY IS BELIEF
ITS MOON IS LOVE
ITS STARS ARE INSPIRATION
ITS CLOUDS ARE REASON
ITS FRUITS ARE OBEDIENCE
AND ITS YIELD IS WISDOM
MY TREASURE HAS FOUR DOORS:
KNOWLEDGE
CONTENTMENT
PATIENCE
REASON
MY TREASURE IS THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER!

In the Qur'an

"Most surely there is a reminder in this for him who has a heart or listens while he is present (50:37)

"And truly he (David) has an intimacy with Us and a good resting place" (38:25)

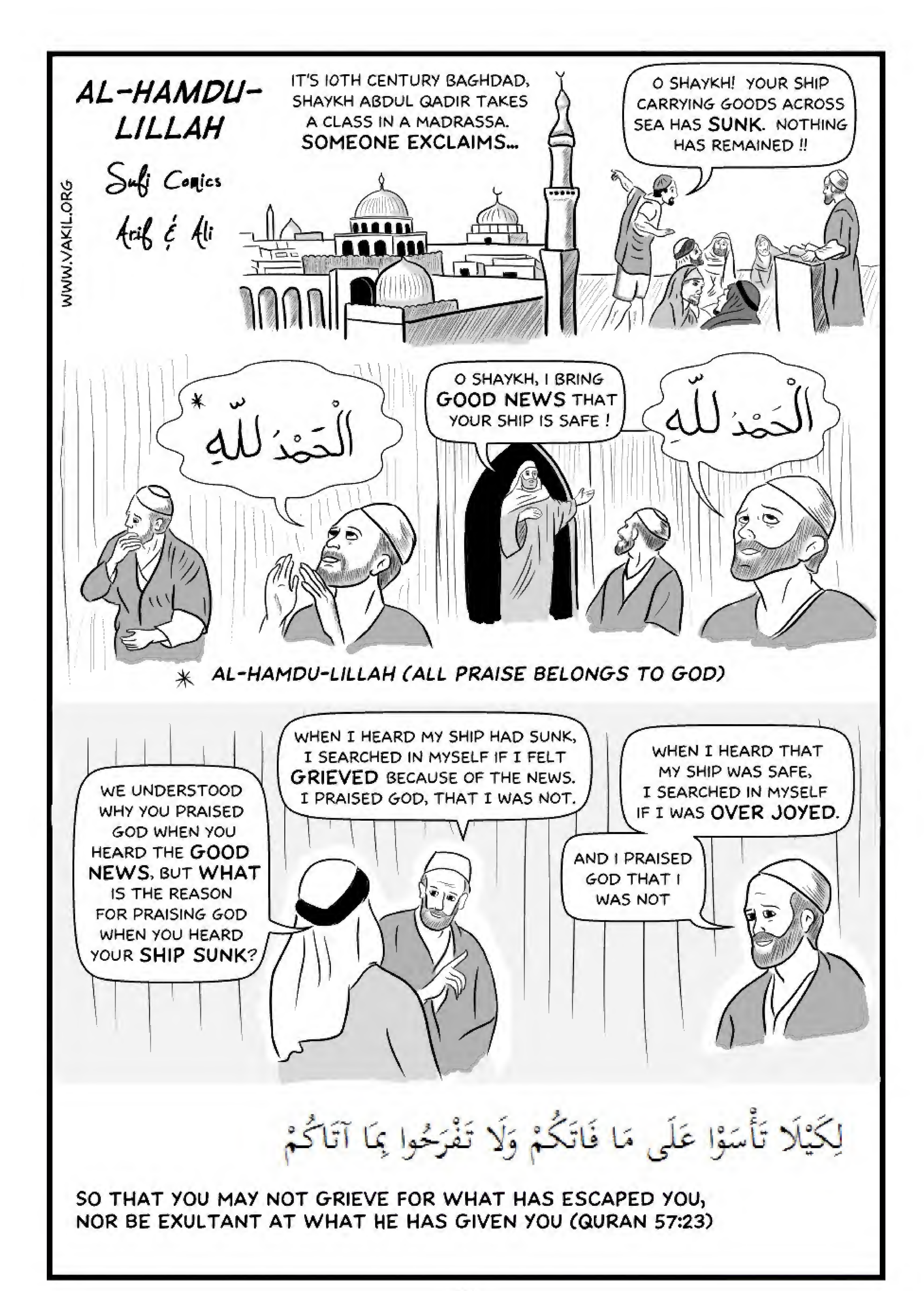
In the Traditions

The Prophet (AS) said, "Allah, most High, has receptacles on the earth, and verily they are the hearts. The most beloved of hearts to Allah are the softest ones, the purest ones, and the firmest ones: those that are the softest to their brothers, those that are the most pure from sins, and those that are the firmest in the path of Allah

Imam Ali said, "Tears only dry up (i.e. fail to flow) as a result of hardness of the heart, and the hearts only harden as a result of frequent sinning.

When a person complained to the Prophet about the hardness of his own heart, the Prophet replied "If you want your heart to soften, feed the needy and stroke the head of orphans."

Imam al-Jawad said, Seeking Allah with the hearts is more effective than tiring the limbs with actions"


AL-HAMDU-LILLAH
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
WWW.VAKIL.ORG
IT'S 10TH CENTURY BAGHDAD, SHAYKH ABDUL QADIR TAKES A CLASS IN A MADRASSA. SOMEONE EXCLAIMS...
O SHAYKH! YOUR SHIP CARRYING GOODS ACROSS SEA HAS SUNK. NOTHING HAS REMAINED !!
اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ *
O SHAYKH, I BRING GOOD NEWS THAT YOUR SHIP IS SAFE !
اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ
* AL-HAMDU-LILLAH (ALL PRAISE BELONGS TO GOD)
WE UNDERSTOOD WHY YOU PRAISED GOD WHEN YOU HEARD THE GOOD NEWS, BUT WHAT IS THE REASON FOR PRAISING GOD WHEN YOU HEARD YOUR SHIP SUNK?
WHEN I HEARD MY SHIP HAD SUNK, I SEARCHED IN MYSELF IF I FELT GRIEVED BECAUSE OF THE NEWS. I PRAISED GOD, THAT I WAS NOT.
WHEN I HEARD THAT MY SHIP WAS SAFE, I SEARCHED IN MYSELF IF I WAS OVER JOYED.
AND I PRAISED GOD THAT I WAS NOT
لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ
SO THAT YOU MAY NOT GRIEVE FOR WHAT HAS ESCAPED YOU, NOR BE EXULTANT AT WHAT HE HAS GIVEN YOU (QURAN 57:23)

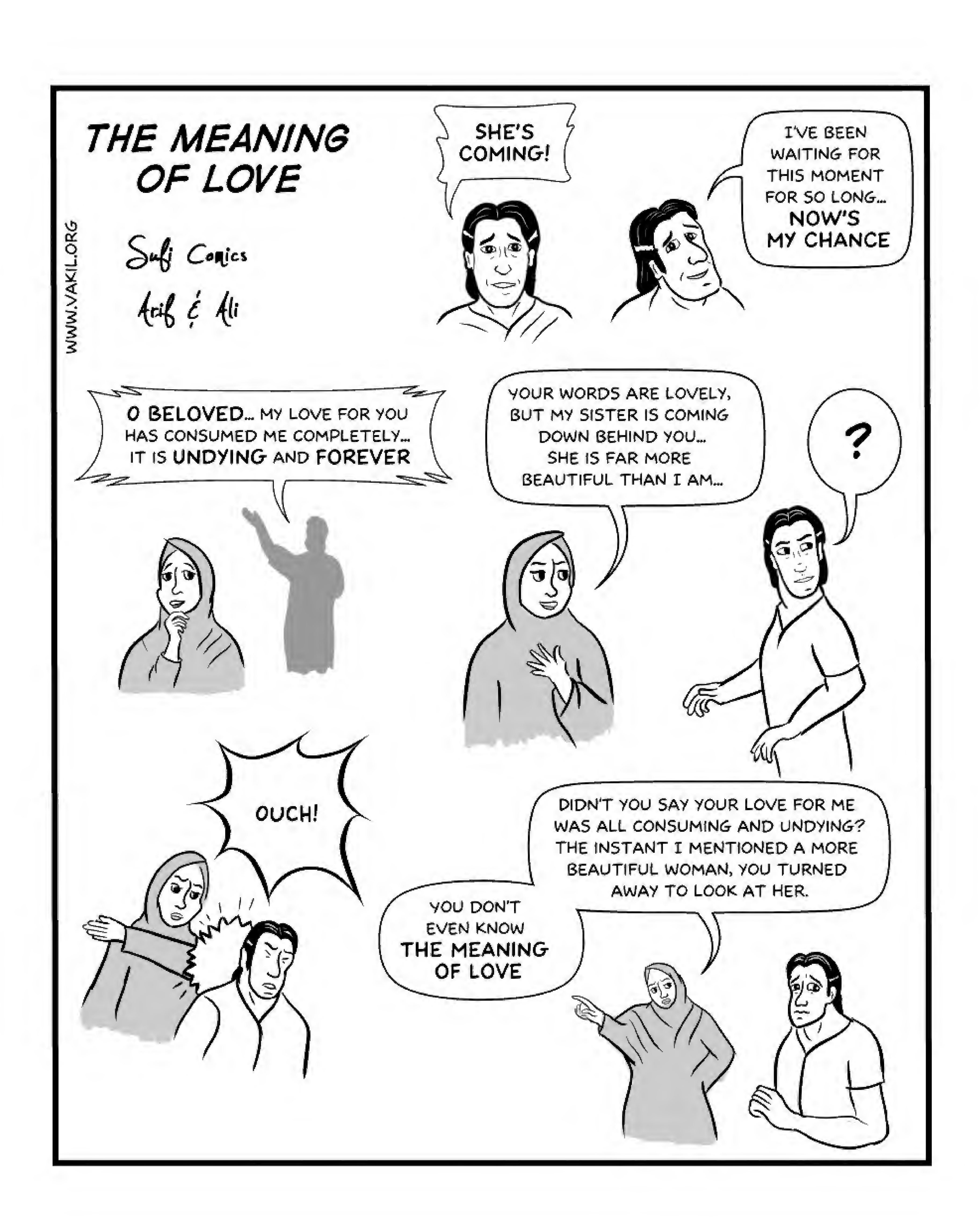
In the Qur'an

So that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor be exultant at what he has given you (57:23)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said, "Contentment is a wealth that never dries up", and "Contentment is an inexhaustible treasure."

Imam Jafar said, "Be patient in what befalls you, for this indeed is one of the greatest tasks."


THE MEANING OF LOVE
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
WWW.VAKIL.ORG
SHE'S COMING!
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS MOMENT FOR SO LONG... NOW'S MY CHANCE
O BELOVED... MY LOVE FOR YOU HAS CONSUMED ME COMPLETELY... IT IS UNDYING AND FOREVER
YOUR WORDS ARE LOVELY, BUT MY SISTER IS COMING DOWN BEHIND YOU... SHE IS FAR MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN I AM...
?
OUCH!
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOUR LOVE FOR ME WAS ALL CONSUMING AND UNDYING? THE INSTANT I MENTIONED A MORE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, YOU TURNED AWAY TO LOOK AT HER.
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW THE MEANING OF LOVE

In the Qur'an

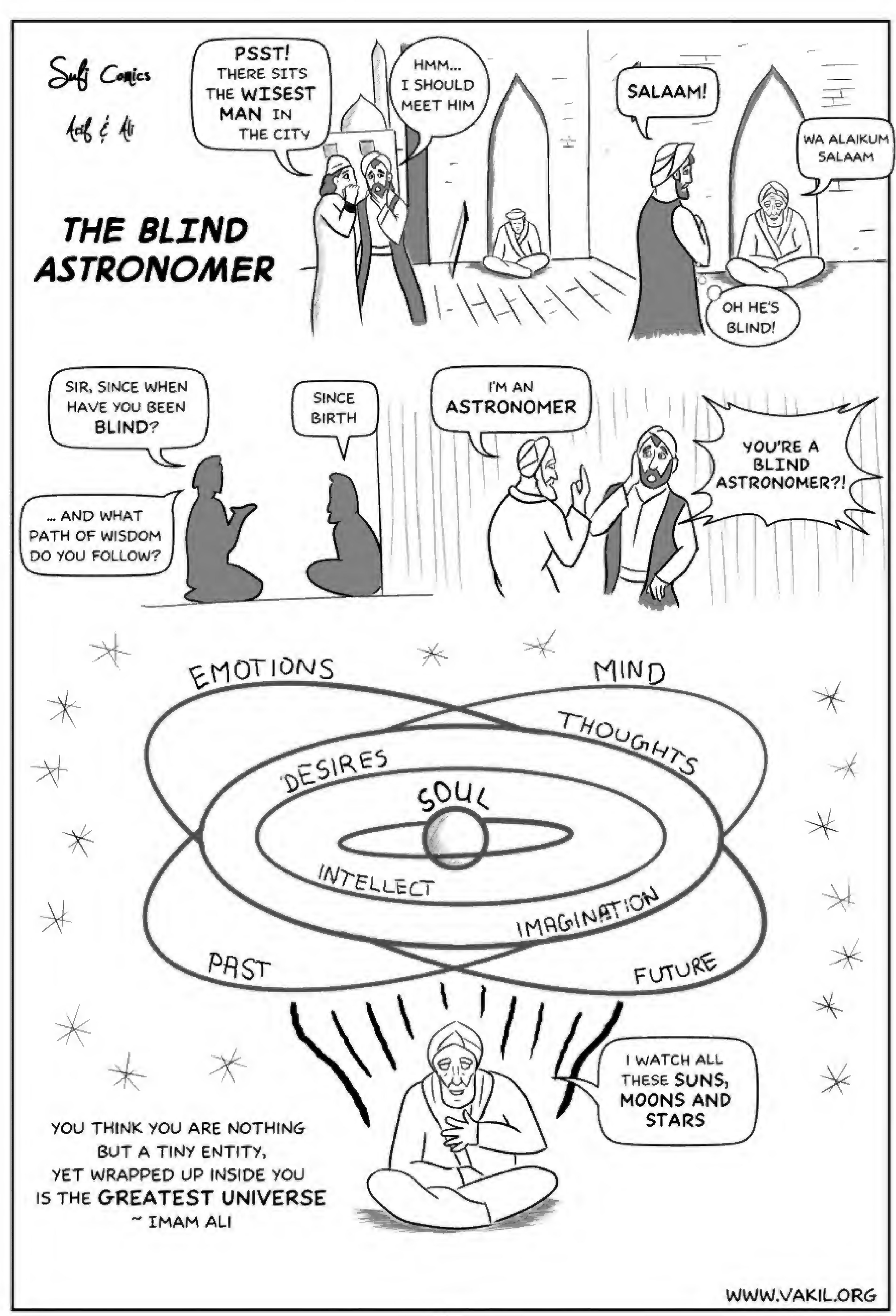
And spend in the way of Allah and cast not yourselves to perdition with your own hands, and do good (to others); surely Allah loves the doers of good. (2:195)

In the Traditions

Imam Jafar said "When love of Allah takes possession of the innermost being of Allah's bondsman, it empties him of every preoccupation except remembrance of Allah. The lover is the most inwardly sincere of all people for Allah. He is the most truthful in his words, the most faithful in his pledge, the most astute in his actions, the purest in remembrance, and the greatest in devoting his self in worship."

Imam Ali said "Love of Allah is a fire which does not pass by anything without burning it up; the light of Allah does not come over something without illuminating it."

Philosophy


Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
THE BLIND ASTRONOMER
PSST! THERE SITS THE WISEST MAN IN THE CITY
HMM... I SHOULD MEET HIM
SALAAM!
WA ALAIKUM SALAAM
OH HE'S BLIND!
SIR, SINCE WHEN HAVE YOU BEEN BLIND?
SINCE BIRTH
... AND WHAT PATH OF WISDOM DO YOU FOLLOW?
I'M AN ASTRONOMER
YOU'RE A BLIND ASTRONOMER?!
EMOTIONS
MIND
THOUGHTS
DESIRES
SOUL
INTELLECT
IMAGINATION
PAST
FUTURE
I WATCH ALL THESE SUNS, MOONS AND STARS
YOU THINK YOU ARE NOTHING BUT A TINY ENTITY, YET WRAPPED UP INSIDE YOU IS THE GREATEST UNIVERSE
~ IMAM ALI
WWW.VAKIL.ORG

In the Qur'an

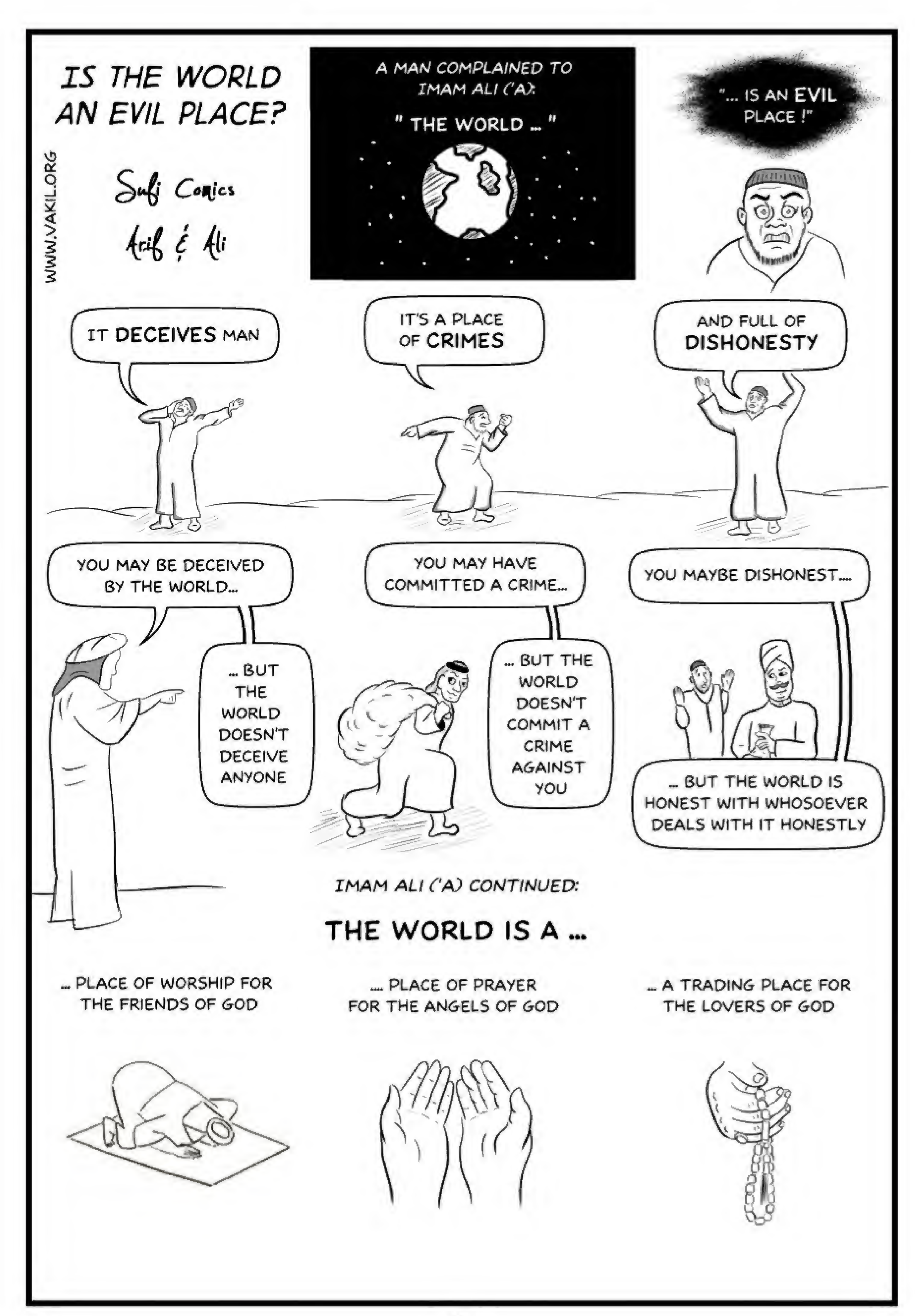
Do they not reflect within themselves? Quran (30:8)

Certainly We created man in the best make. (95:4)

In the Traditions

Prophet Muhmmad said, "Whoever knows himself knows his Lord"

Imam Ali said:
Your sickness is within you, though you do not realize
And your cure is within, yet you do not see
You claim that you are nothing but a tiny entity
Yet wrapped up inside of you is the greatest universe
You are the clear book, through whose letters
All that is secret is revealed and made known.
So you have no need for anything outside of you
Your consciousness is within you, though you do not know


IS THE WORLD AN EVIL PLACE?
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
WWW.VAKIL.ORG
A MAN COMPLAINED TO IMAM ALI ('A):
" THE WORLD ... "
"... IS AN EVIL PLACE !"
IT DECEIVES MAN
IT'S A PLACE OF CRIMES
AND FULL OF DISHONESTY
YOU MAY BE DECEIVED BY THE WORLD...
... BUT THE WORLD DOESN'T DECEIVE ANYONE
YOU MAY HAVE COMMITTED A CRIME...
... BUT THE WORLD DOESN'T COMMIT A CRIME AGAINST YOU
YOU MAYBE DISHONEST....
... BUT THE WORLD IS HONEST WITH WHOSOEVER DEALS WITH IT HONESTLY
IMAM ALI ('A) CONTINUED:
THE WORLD IS A ...
... PLACE OF WORSHIP FOR THE FRIENDS OF GOD
.... PLACE OF PRAYER FOR THE ANGELS OF GOD
... A TRADING PLACE FOR THE LOVERS OF GOD

In the Qur'an

And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all from Himself, most surely there are signs in this for people who reflect (45:13)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said, "Do not insult the world for it is the best mount for the believer, because by means of it he attains good and through it he is saved from evil."


FREE WILL OR
PRE-DESTINATION
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
www.vakil.org
O IMAM! WHICH OF MY ACTIONS ARE BY MY FREE WILL AND WHICH ARE PRE-DESTINED?
LIFT YOUR RIGHT LEG
THAT'S FREEWILL
OK
LIFT YOUR LEFT LEG
THAT'S PRE-DESTINATION
I CAN'T

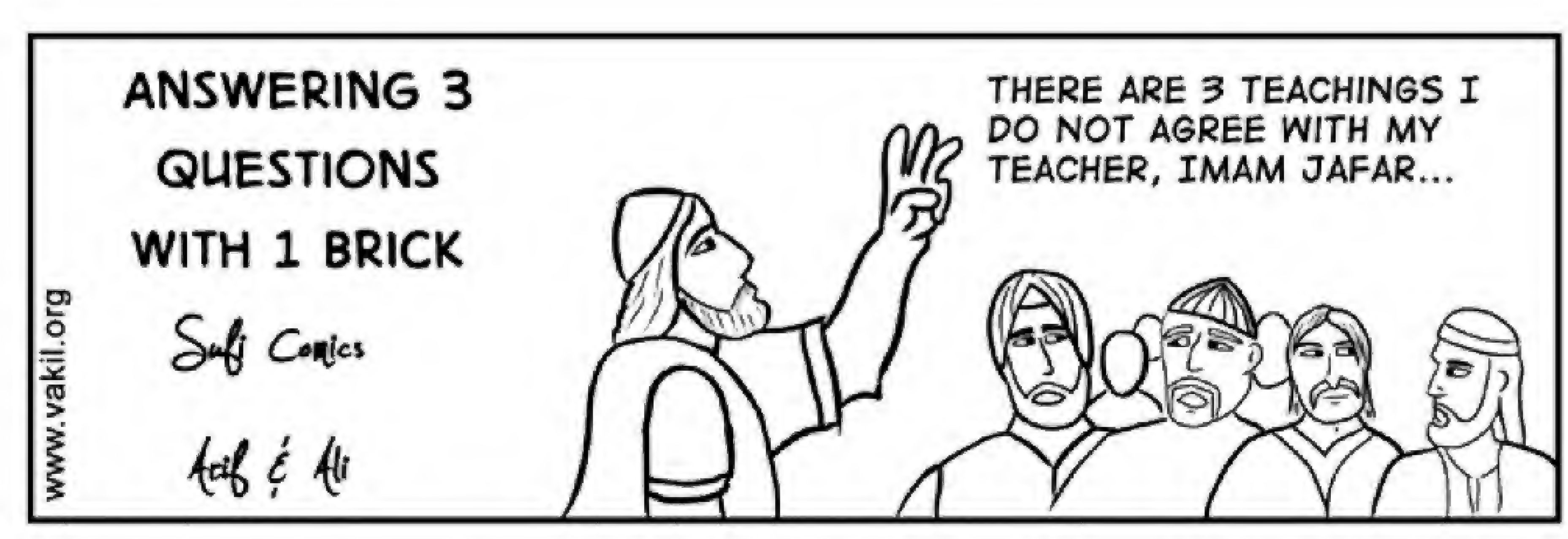
In the Qur'an

And Allah has created you and what you make (37:96)

He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal). (20:50)

In the Traditions

A person asked Imam Ali whether man has the power to exercise free will or not. If he has the power to do things, then how is it possible to say that there is no power nor help but from Allah? The Imam said: "You have ability by the Will of Allah, while He has it independently. If He endows you with it, that is His favour. If He takes it away from you, that means He is testing you. In any case, you should remember that whatever He bestows on you, He is still its owner. If He enables you to do a thing, that thing is still within His power".





1. GOD CAN NEVER BE SEEN. HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?

2. SINCE SATAN IS MADE OF FIRE, HOW CAN HE FEEL ANY PAIN IN HELL-FIRE?

3. IF GOD IS IN CONTROL OF MAN'S DESTINY, WHY SHOULD MAN BE PUNISHED FOR SINS?







THIS MAN CLAIMS THAT IF GOD IS THERE, THEN HE MUST BE SEEN. HE IS NOW COMPLAINING OF PAIN. JUST AS PAIN CAN BE THERE WITHOUT BEING SEEN GOD ALSO EXISTS WITHOUT BEING SEEN.

HE IS MADE OUT OF CLAY AND THIS BRICK WITH WHICH I HIT HIS HEAD IS ALSO MADE OUT OF CLAY, IF CLAY CAN INFLICT PAIN AND HURT CLAY, WHY CAN'T FIRE DO THE SAME TO FIRE?

LASTLY, WHY DOES HE WANT JUSTICE FROM YOU? HE MIGHT AS WELL TRANSFER THE PUNISHMENT TO GOD WHO, ACCORDING TO HIM - IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE ACTIONS OF MAN.

In the Qur'an

He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good and none but men of understanding mind. (2:269)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said, "The very basis of man is his intellect, and the man devoid of intellect has no religion."

Imam Al-Kadhim in his advice to Hisham, "O Hisham, nothing has been bestowed upon the servants better than the intellect. The sleep of a man of intellect is better than the night vigil of an ignorant man. Every single Prophet that Allah has sent down has been a man of intellect, whose intellect supersedes the labour of all diligent workers. The servant is not considered as having fulfilled an obligatory act from among the acts made incumbent by Allah until he understands it."

DIVIDING 17 CAMELS BETWEEN 3 PEOPLE

Sufi Comics

Arif & Ali

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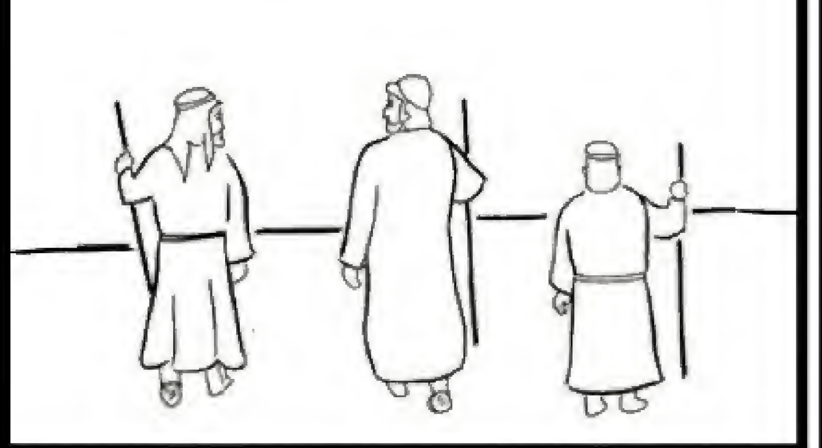
My Will

I HAVE 17 CAMELS AND 3 SONS.
DIVIDE MY CAMELS IN SUCH A WAY THAT:
MY ELDEST SON GETS HALF OF THE TOTAL
MY SECOND SON GETS A THIRD OF THE TOTAL
MY YOUNGEST SON GETS ONE-NINTH
OF THE TOTAL.





SO THE 3 OF THEM SET OUT TO MEET IMAM ALI



AND THEY EXPLAIN TO HIM THEIR PROBLEM...

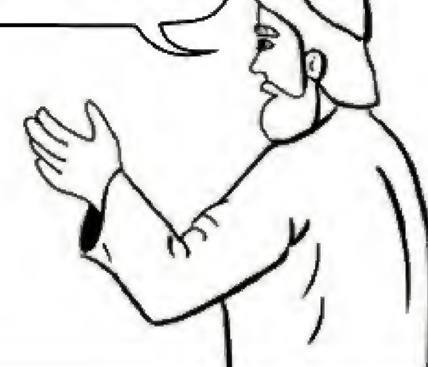




THE ELDEST SON GETS 1/2 OF 18 = 9
THE SECOND ONE GETS 1/3 OF 18 = 6
THE YOUNGEST GETS 1/9 OF 18 = 2

NOW THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CAMELS = 17 (9+6+2)

NOW I WILL TAKE MY CAMEL BACK.



In the Qur'an

Allah commands you that when you judge between people you judge with justice (4:58)

In the Traditions

Imam Jafar has said, "The proof of the man of intellect lies in two things: truthful words and correct actions. The man of intellect does not say something which the intellect rejects, neither does he expose himself to suspicion, nor abandon the help of those who have been tested. Knowledge guides him in his actions; gnosis is his certainty in the paths he treads, and forbearance is his companion at all times."


A VISIT TO HELL
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
WWW.VAKIL.ORG
HARUN RASHID ONCE MET BAHLOOL THE WISE...
WHERE ARE YOU COMING FROM IN THIS STATE?
JUST CAME BACK FROM HELL !
FIRE WAS NEEDED SO I THOUGHT OF GOING TO HELL
... TO ASK IF THEY COULD SPARE A LITTLE
BUT THE FELLOW IN CHARGE SAID 'THERE'S NO FIRE HERE'
I ASKED 'ISN'T HELL A PLACE OF FIRE ?'
HE SAID 'THERE REALLY IS NO FIRE DOWN HERE ...
... BECAUSE EVERYONE BRINGS HIS OWN FIRE WHEN HE COMES !'
HE WHO DOES AN ATOM'S WEIGHT OF GOOD, SHALL SEE IT AND HE WHO DOES AN ATOM'S WEIGHT OF EVIL, SHALL SEE IT ~ QURAN (99:7-8)

In the Qur'an

So. he who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it. And he who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it. (99:7-8)

In the Traditions

Imam Ja'far was asked the meaning of Allah's words, '(In order) that He may try you - which of you is best in deed,' (67:2) and he answered, 'this does not mean the greatest number of deeds, but rather the most correct deeds: truly, correctness comes from fear of Allah and a good and sincere intention. Perseverance in a deed until one finishes it is the hardest of deeds. A sincere deed is one for which you want no one's praise but Allah's; indeed the intention is better than the deed itself, rather, the intention is a deed.' The he read Allah's word, ' Say: everyone acts according to his manner,' (17:84) and explained it as meaning, 'according to his intention'.

ARTIST'S NOTES: HEAVEN & HELL ARE NOT JUST SOMETHING AWAITING FOR US IN THE AFTERLIFE, IT IS SOMETHING WE ARE CREATING FOR OURSELVES HERE AND NOW. WE CREATE OUR HEAVEN & HELL AS WE MAKE OUR CHOICES BETWEEN ACTIONS THAT EITHER PROMOTE OR RESTRICT OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH. THE CLOSER WE MOVE TOWARDS GOD WE MOVE TOWARDS HEAVEN, AND THE FURTHER AWAY WE DISTANCE FROM GOD, WE MOVE TOWARDS HELL.

KEY TO KNOWLEDGE

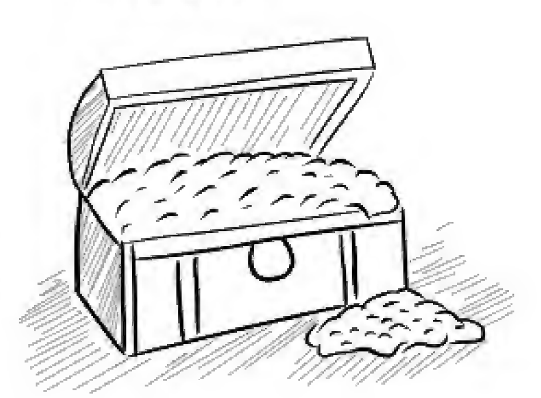
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THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW) ADVISED HIS PEOPLE:

KNOWLEDGE IS A **TREASURE** !



THE KEY TO WHICH IS THE ...



QUESTION

SO **ASK** AND ALLAH WILL HAVE **MERCY** ON YOU FOR VERILY FOUR PEOPLE ARE REWARDED...



قُل رَّبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

MY LORD! INCREASE ME IN MY KNOWLEDGE ~ QURAN (20 : 114)

In the Qur'an

Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know? Only those who possess intellect take admonition (39:9)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said, "The quest for knowledge is incumbent upon ever Muslim, by virtue of it the Lord is obeyed and worshipped, consanguinal relations are maintained, and the lawful is distinguished from the prohibited. Knowledge leads to action and action follows it. The fortunate ones are inspired by it whereas the wretched ones are deprived of it."

Imam Ali said, "Knowledge is better than wealth, for knowledge guards you while you guard wealth, and wealth is reduced by spending, whereas knowledge increases by spending it, and any good produced by wealth (respect and honour) ceases when it ceases to exist."

Imam Ali said, The scholar is alive even when he is dead, whereas the ignorant man is dead even though he may be alive."

The Prophet said, "An hour spent by a knowledgeable man lying on his bed thinking about his deeds is better than seventy years spent by the worshiper performing acts of worship."

NO PROBLEM!

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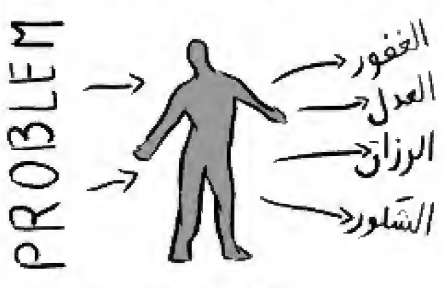
WE THINK PROBLEMS ARE **BAD**, BUT PROBLEMS CAN BE A **GOOD THING**, IF WE CAN CHANGE OUR **PERSPECTIVE**.

PROBLEM

=

GOOD THING

PROBLEMS CAN BECOME A MEANS FOR THE **ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH** TO REAVEAL THROUGH US INTO THIS WORLD



HOW? ....

WHEN YOU SEE **POVERTY** GIVE CHARITY TO **SUSTAIN** THE POOR.



THE SUSTAINER



WHEN SOMEONE HAS DONE SOMETHING TO **HURT** YOU, **FORGIVE** THEM.



THE FORGIVER

WHEN YOU'RE FEELING **DEPRESSED**, BECOME **APPRECIATIVE** OF ALLAH'S BOUNTIES



THE APPRECIATIVE

WHEN YOU SEE **INJUSTICE** IN THIS WORLD, BECOME A FORCE OF **JUSTICE**



THE JUST



THE NEXT TIME YOU'RE FACED WITH A PROBLEM, **LOOK** AT THE PROBLEM FROM **GOD'S PERSPECTIVE**

PROBLEM

=

GOOD THING

AND ASK WHICH OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH NEED TO **MANIFEST** IN THIS SITUATION



USE THESE ATTRIBUTES AS **ANTIDOTES** FOR THE PROBLEM, BY MEDITATING ON THEIR MEANINGS...



... AND THEN BY TAKING **ACTION!**

In the Qur'an

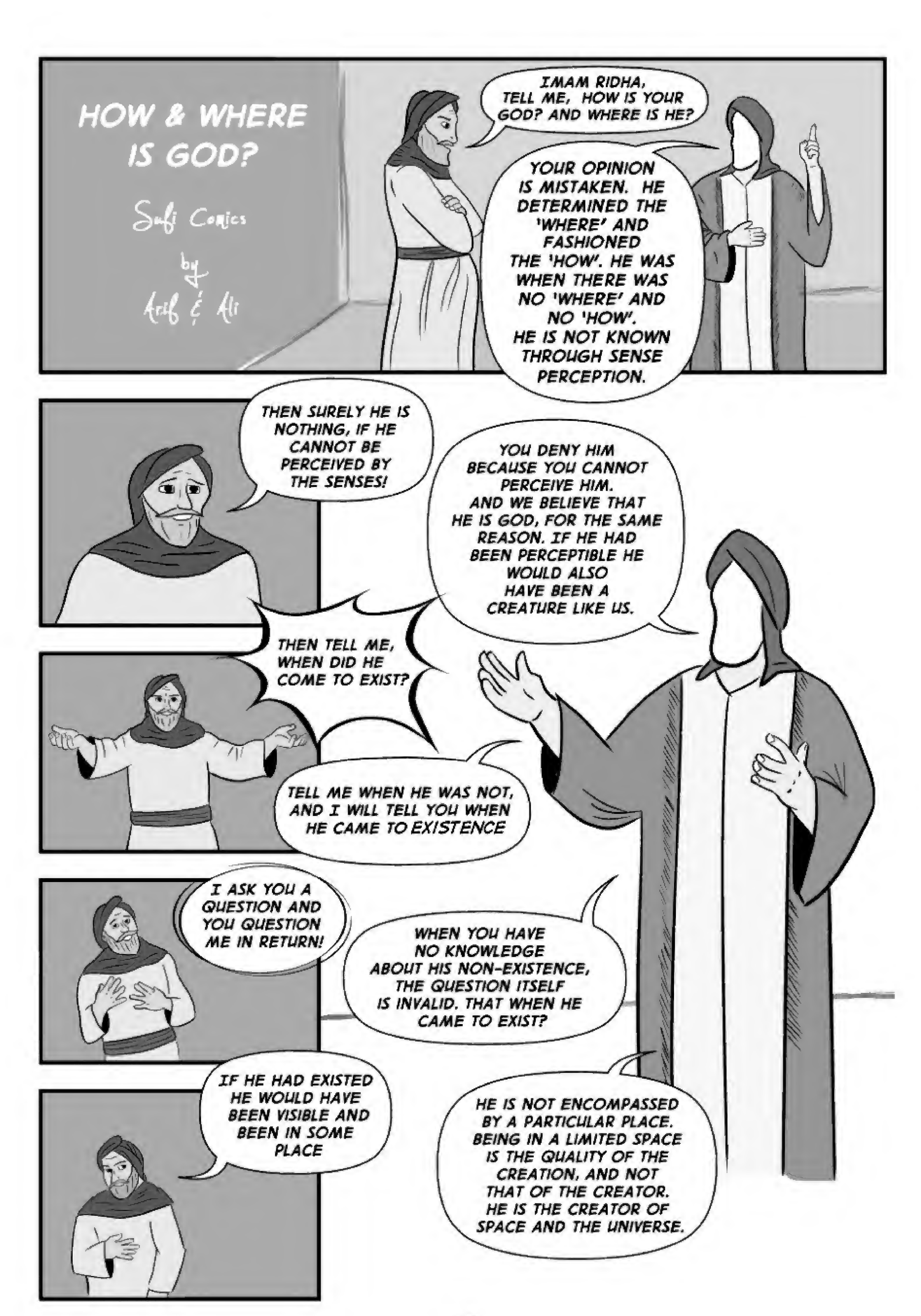
Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere (2:155)

In the Traditions

The Prophet said, "When Allah loves a servant He tests him with tribulations, and if he endures these He selects him (for His Proximity), and if he bears them with satisfaction, He distinguishes him (a higher status)."

ARTIST'S NOTES: THIS HAS TO BE MY FAVORITE SUFI COMIC. HOW DOES SPIRITUAL PRACTICE & OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD HELP US TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS IN OUR DAILY LIVES? THE ANSWER IS IN THIS COMIC.

Existence of God


HOW & WHERE IS GOD?
Sufi Comics by Arif & Ali
IMAM RIDHA, TELL ME, HOW IS YOUR GOD? AND WHERE IS HE?
YOUR OPINION IS MISTAKEN. HE DETERMINED THE 'WHERE' AND FASHIONED THE 'HOW'. HE WAS WHEN THERE WAS NO 'WHERE' AND NO 'HOW'. HE IS NOT KNOWN THROUGH SENSE PERCEPTION.
THEN SURELY HE IS NOTHING, IF HE CANNOT BE PERCEIVED BY THE SENSES!
YOU DENY HIM BECAUSE YOU CANNOT PERCEIVE HIM. AND WE BELIEVE THAT HE IS GOD, FOR THE SAME REASON. IF HE HAD BEEN PERCEPTIBLE HE WOULD ALSO HAVE BEEN A CREATURE LIKE US.
THEN TELL ME, WHEN DID HE COME TO EXIST?
TELL ME WHEN HE WAS NOT, AND I WILL TELL YOU WHEN HE CAME TO EXISTENCE
I ASK YOU A QUESTION AND YOU QUESTION ME IN RETURN!
WHEN YOU HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HIS NON-EXISTENCE, THE QUESTION ITSELF IS INVALID. THAT WHEN HE CAME TO EXIST?
IF HE HAD EXISTED HE WOULD HAVE BEEN VISIBLE AND BEEN IN SOME PLACE
HE IS NOT ENCOMPASSED BY A PARTICULAR PLACE. BEING IN A LIMITED SPACE IS THE QUALITY OF THE CREATION, AND NOT THAT OF THE CREATOR. HE IS THE CREATOR OF SPACE AND THE UNIVERSE.

In the Qur'an

And your god is one God! There is no god but He; He is the Beneficent the Merciful (2:163)

In the Traditions

The Prophet has said: "Truly Allah resembles no 'thing' and no 'thing' resembles Him; everything which enters one's imagination concerning Him is a misinterpretation."

A man asked the Prophet, "O Muhammad, describe for me thy Lord."

The Prophet answered,"Surely the Creator cannot be described except by that with which He has described Himself-and how should one describe that Creator whom the senses cannot perceive, imaginations cannot attain, thoughts cannot delimit and sight cannot encompass? Greater is He than what the depictors describe. He is distant in His nearness and near in His distance. He fashions 'howness', so it is not said of Him, 'How?'; He determines the 'where', so it is not said of Him, 'Where ?'. He sunders 'howness' and 'whereness', so He is "One . . . the Everlasting Refuge" (112: -2), as He has described Himself. But depictors do not attain to His description. 'He has not begotten, and has not been begotten, and equal to Him is not any one' (112:3-4).


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I AM THE CREATOR
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
HMM... I'M GOING TO PUT MUD AND WATER IN A BOTTLE FOR WORMS TO GROW. I WILL MAKE A CLAIM THAT THE IMAM CANNOT REFUTE!
O IMAM JAFAR I AM THE CREATOR OF THESE WORMS
REALLY? TELL US HOW MANY OF THEM ARE MALE AND HOW MANY FEMALE? COMMAND THE WORMS GOING ONE WAY TO CRAWL IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION. AT LEAST TELL US WHAT IS THE WEIGHT OF EACH OF THEM?
I DON'T KNOW
I CAN'T DO IT
I DON'T KNOW
WHEN NEITHER YOU HAVE ANY KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THEM, NOR ANY CONTROL OVER THEM, THEN HOW CAN YOU BE THEIR CREATOR?

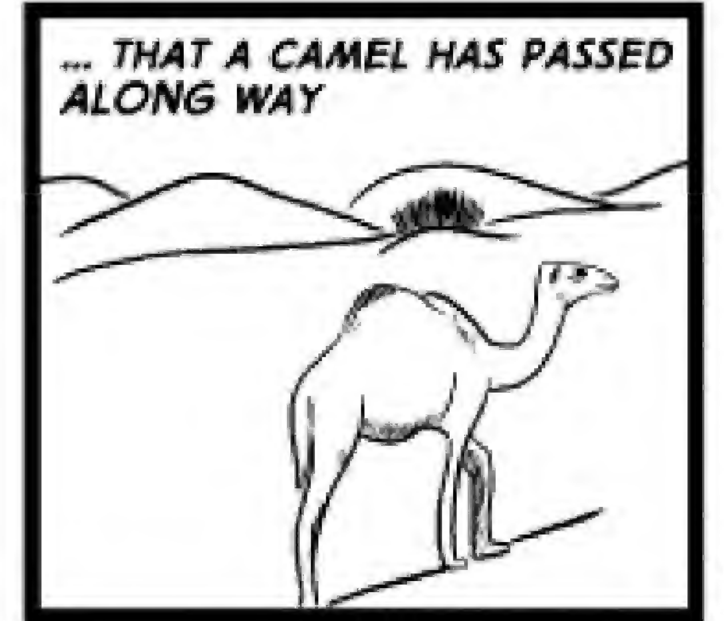
In the Qur'an

Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were joined together as one united piece, then We parted them? And We have made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe? (21:30)

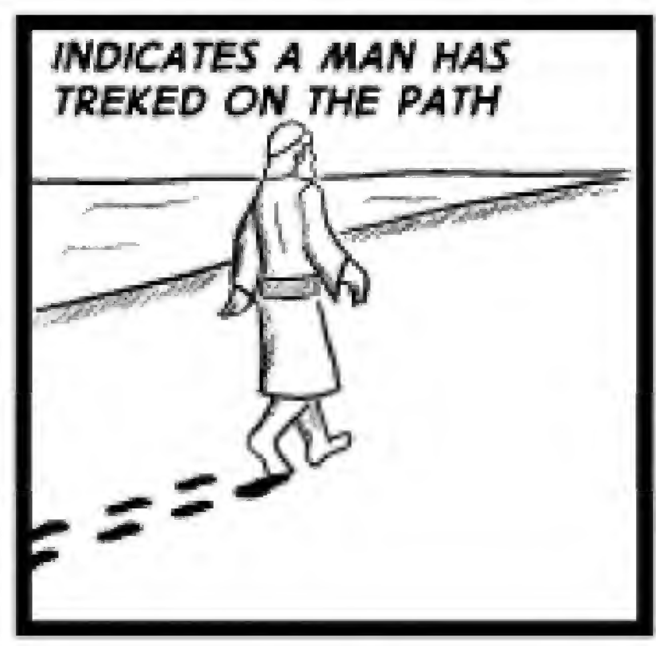
In the Traditions

Imam Ja'far was asked by Mufaddal "O my master, there is a group of people that claim that this (creation) is the doing of nature (itself)", the Imam said, "Ask them about this nature, does it have knowledge and power to carry out such actions (as creation) or not? For if they answer that it has knowledge and power, then what is preventing them from acknowledging the existence of a creator? For verily, this is His creation. If they claim that nature does these actions without knowledge or without purpose while having witnessed the exactness and wisdom therein, it is (obviously) known that this is the work of a very wise creator, and what they have called 'nature' is the very system running through creation."









LOOK AT THIS GRAND UNIVERSE! WITH ALL IT'S CREATURES...

BOTH BIG....

AND SMALL...

IT IS EVIDENCE OF AN ALMIGHTY CREATOR!

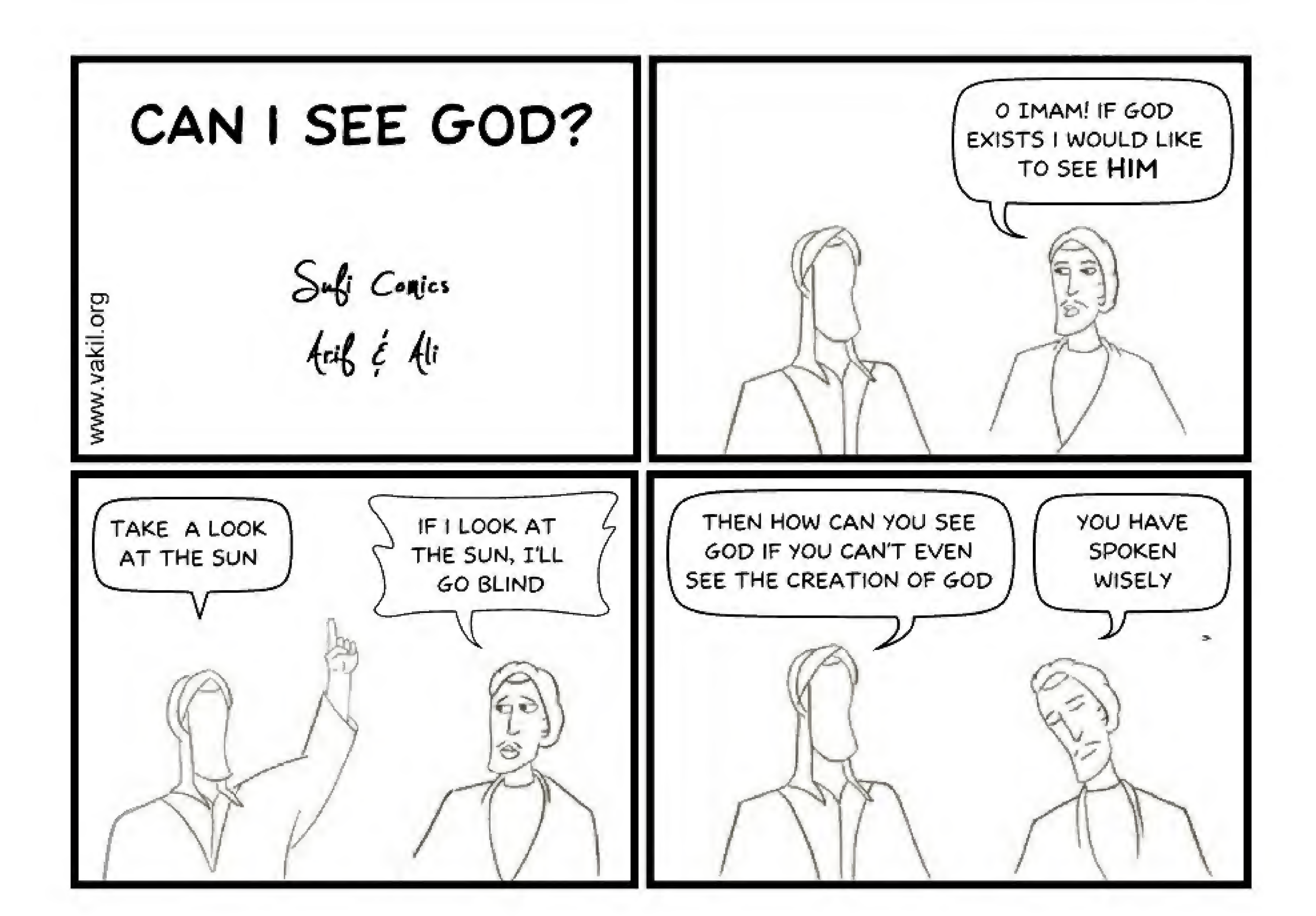
In the Qur'an

Verily in the heavens and the earth are Signs for those who believe. And in your (own) creation and in what He spreads abroad of animals there are signs for a people that are sure; And (in) the variation of the night and the day, and (in) what Allah sends down of sustenance from the clouds, then gives life thereby to the earth after its death, and (in) the changing of the winds, there are signs for a people who understand. (45: 3-5)

In the Traditions

Imam Ali said "Wonder at man, who observes with a ball of fat (the eye), who talks with a lump of flesh (the tongue), who listens by means of a bone (the inner ear) and breathes through a hole in the flesh (the nose)."

Imam Jafar said "Consider the universe together with its sun, moon, stars and Zodiac, which revolve perpetually in accordance with a definite decree and judgement to bring about numerous benefits to the denizens of the earth, variegated animal and vegetable kingdoms through the changes in the four seasons, the days and nights, which have been expatiated to you. Can any man with a discerning mind think that such regulated plan and design on which depend the order and organisation of the universe, can come about without the Omniscient Designer? If someone says that mere chance has brought this about, why does he not say that same thing in connection with the Persian-wheel which he sees revolving, irrigating a garden planted with trees and vegetation? He sees all its component parts manufactured according to a definite plan, each part coupled with the other on a pattern to serve the needs of the garden and its contents."


CAN I SEE GOD?
Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali
www.vakil.org
O IMAM! IF GOD EXISTS I WOULD LIKE TO SEE HIM
TAKE A LOOK AT THE SUN
IF I LOOK AT THE SUN, I'LL GO BLIND
THEN HOW CAN YOU SEE GOD IF YOU CAN'T EVEN SEE THE CREATION OF GOD
YOU HAVE SPOKEN WISELY

In the Qur'an

Say: He, Allah is One. Allah is He upon whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten. And none is like unto Him (112:1-4)

In the Traditions

Imam Ali was asked by one of his companions, Dhi'lib al-Yamani, 'Have you seen your Lord?' The Imam replied, 'I would not worship a Lord whom I have not seen.' He was then asked, 'How did you see Him?' The Imam replied, 'The eyes cannot see Him according to outward vision; rather, it is the hearts that perceive Him, through the verities of faith.'

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A collection of Traditions from the Prophet Muhammad and the Ahlyl Bayt. The narrations are arranged according to topics.
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Publisher: Muhammadi Trust

Nahjul Balagha
A collection of Sermons, Letters and Sayings left as a memorial from Imam Ali (as).
Compiled by: Syed Radi
Publisher: Tahrike Tarsile Quran

Sahife Sajjadiya (Pslams of Islam)
The oldest prayer manual in Islamic sources and one of the most seminal works of Islamic spirituality of the early period. It was composed by the Prophet's great grandson, `Ali ibn al-Husayn, known as Zayn al-'Abidin.
Translated by: William Chittick
Publisher: Muhammadi Trust

Lantern of the Path
A collection of sayings by Imam Jafar Sadiq on knowledge, behaviour remembrance, prayer and fear of God.
Translated by: Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri
Publisher: Muhammadi Trust

Mizan Al-Hikmah (The Scale of Wisdom)
A collection of traditions by the Prophet & the Ahlul Bayt, covering almost 2000 topics. Collection complied by M Muhammadi Rayshahri
Translated by: N Virjee, A Kadhim, M Bozorgi, Z Alsalami,A Virjee
Publisher: ICAS Press